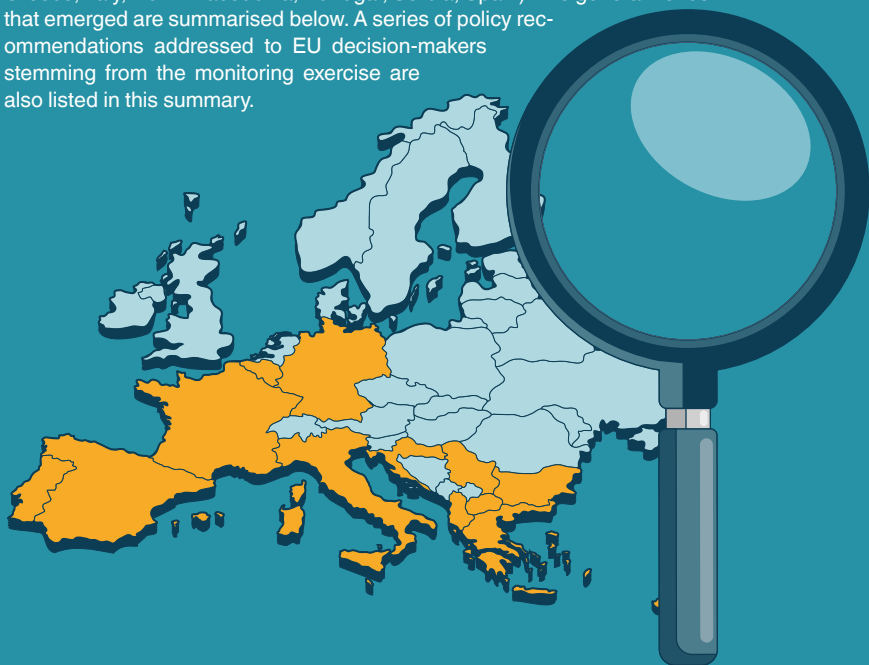

SOCIAL RIGHTS MONITOR '24

at a glance

The Social Rights Monitor (SRM) analyses the state of the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights at national level, as well as the situation of the just transition and civic space. It builds on the assessments carried out by the National Strategy Groups (NSGs) composed of experts from national civil society organisations and led by SOLIDAR's members. In 2024, 12 countries were analysed (Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, North Macedonia, Portugal, Serbia, Spain). The general trends that emerged are summarised below. A series of policy recommendations addressed to EU decision-makers stemming from the monitoring exercise are also listed in this summary.

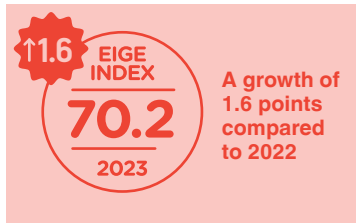


01

Equal opportunities and access to the labour market

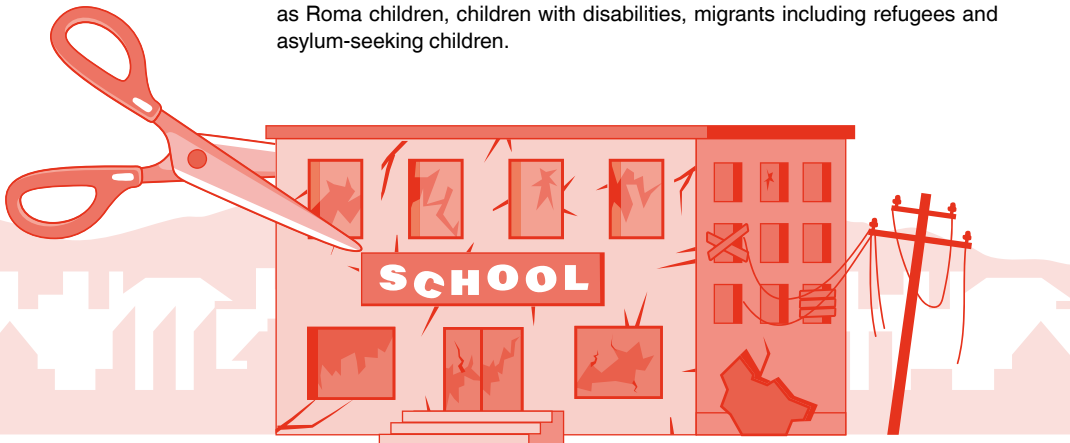
GENDER EQUALITY

The EIGE's Gender Equality Index for 2023 registered at 70.2 points out of 100 for the European Union, representing a growth of 1.6 points compared to 2022. However, the EU lacks a score in the domain of gender-based violence due to insufficient and non-comparable data. According to the NSGs, **gender-based violence** remains a serious issue across Europe, with some countries experiencing increases in violence against women, including femicides, and the LGBTQI+ community. Persistent employment gaps and low economic independence for women are at the root of gender inequalities.



EDUCATION, TRAINING AND LIFELONG LEARNING

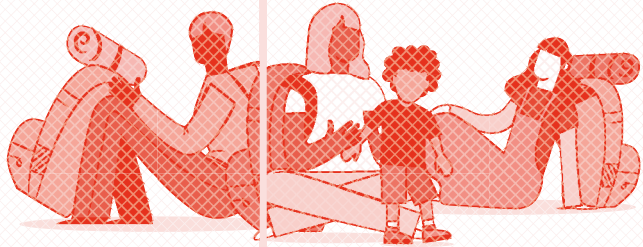
NSGs reported regional disparities in educational access and quality, with many teachers lacking access to continuous professional development opportunities. Meanwhile, **budget cuts have significantly strained education systems across Europe**. Restrained resources also negatively affect the inclusion of pupils in vulnerable situations in the education system, such as Roma children, children with disabilities, migrants including refugees and asylum-seeking children.



INCLUSION OF MRAS AND MINORITIES

In late 2023, the EU reached a political agreement on the **Pact on Migration and Asylum**, which institutionalises appalling practices, notably **de facto detention of asylum-seekers** and second-rated asylum procedures at the borders. In Europe, migrants including refugees, asylum seekers and people in an irregular status face obstacles in accessing essential services and the labour market, in violation of their social rights. Positive measures introduced to welcome Ukrainian migrants keep not being extended to migrants from other origins.

EU PACT on Migration and Asylum



02

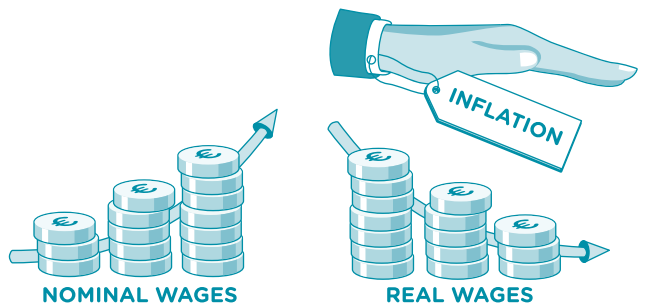
Fair Working Conditions

ADEQUATE WAGES

In the second quarter of 2023, real wages in the EU fell by **0.8% compared to the same period in 2022**. While some countries have made strides in ensuring adequate minimum wage levels across Europe, others lag considerably behind, despite the deadline for the transposition of the Adequate Minimum Wage Directive into national legislation on 15th November 2024. In a context characterised by high inflation, a recurring challenge to be urgently addressed is the **gap between nominal wages and real wages**.

REAL WAGES IN THE EU FELL **↓0,8%**

by 0.8% compared to the same period in 2022

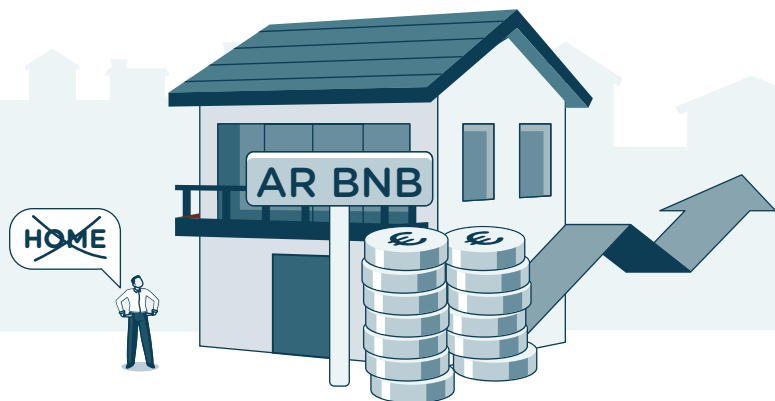


03

Social inclusion and protection

I HOUSING

In 2023, **housing prices and rents increased outpacing wage growth**, which raised concerns about affordability across the EU. From the reports emerged a significant insufficiency and inadequacy in social housing across Europe. Gentrification and housing solutions used for tourism purposes combined with housing stock shortages result in unaffordable housing for more and more people in Europe.



I ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

National healthcare systems are under increasing pressure, leading to deteriorating working conditions and eroding the quality and accessibility of services. Out-of-pocket costs for patients, territorial inequalities, inadequate public expenditure and **staff shortages** weaken quality public healthcare provision. Private healthcare is, in the meantime, expanding, also thanks to public funding. The picture is even grimmer for groups in vulnerable situations.



04

Just Transition

ACCESS TO CLEAN ENERGY

PERCENTAGE OF individuals unable to keep their homes adequately **WARM IS RISING** from 6.9% in 2021 to 10.6% in 2023

Energy poverty in Europe has been steadily increasing, with the percentage of individuals unable to keep their homes adequately **warm rising from 6.9% in 2021 to 10.6% in 2023**. As a response, most countries are relying on short-term solutions, such as energy vouchers, which do not address the deeper structural issues. In many countries, people continue to live in poorly insulated homes, facing inadequate heating in winter and insufficient cooling in summer. On the bright side, some progress has been made in developing more clean energy solutions.



05

Civic space and civil dialogue

ENABLING SPACE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

In 2023, climate groups expressed strong opposition to the energy policy shifts made by EU nations in response to the crisis. In turn, European governments increasingly repressed environmental activists, with non-violent protests met with arrests, prosecutions, and intimidation. A similar trend has been observed for pro-Palestinian protests. Reports of **bans on protests, police repression, and restrictions on the right to strike are increasing**. Inadequate Funding for CSOs across Europe and pressure on the freedom of associations have been reported.



The involvement of CSOs in civil dialogue across Europe has shown mixed progress, with good practices of platforms for dialogue between civil society organisations and decision-makers being created in countries like Germany and Spain. On the other hand, reports of key political decisions being made without proper consultation with relevant CSOs in several other countries have emerged, underscoring the need to make CSOs involvement more meaningful, including in the context of the EU accession process in the Western Balkans.



Good practices of platforms for **DIALOGUE** between civil society organisations and decision-makers being created in countries like Germany and Spain.



06

Policy recommendations

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET

- Ensure **adequate funding for public education** at national level and prioritise the development of curricula for essential transversal competences, beyond labour market participation, including Global Citizenship Education.
- Ensure that all **migrants, including refugees, asylum seekers and people in an irregular status**, are included in society by supporting their integration into the labour market, access to healthcare, education including Global Citizenship Education, and all essential services by eliminating the specific barriers they face.

FAIR WORKING CONDITIONS

- Ensure an **ambitious implementation of the adequate minimum wage directive** in the wake of the deadline for its transposition at national level. Monitor the regular revision of the adequacy thresholds in the light of inflation.
- **Strengthen social dialogue also in candidate countries**, as a fundamental instrument to ensure that the social acquis is successfully integrated in these countries' legislation.
- Take advantage of the review of the European Labour Authority (ELA)'s performance to **increase the support to national labour authorities** to carry out inspections. Ensure that ELA leads the way also for candidate countries in protecting fair working conditions.

- Support the development of **strong European, national, and local community-based strategies for the social and solidarity economy**. These strategies should address the financial needs of social economy actors and promote a just green and digital transition, including through public procurement and a fair-trade policy.
-

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND PROTECTION

- Make **access to affordable, sustainable and decent housing** a high priority by increasing investment in social housing solutions, controlling rental prices
 - and regulating the touristic accommodation sector and its disastrous impact on housing affordability for residents.
 - Ensure that the announced **Affordable Housing Plan connects housing unaffordability and homelessness**, tackling the root causes of both in a holistic way.
 - Achieve **universal access to healthcare by stimulating investment in public healthcare services** and discouraging dispersion of resources towards the private sector. Employ these funds also to substantially improve working conditions of healthcare workers.
- Put forward a **comprehensive EU Anti-Poverty Strategy** that prioritises adequacy of minimum income scheme including through the introduction of an adequate minimum income directive.
-

JUST TRANSITION

- **Address the consumption-side of energy poverty** by introducing measures that put caps on energy bills and support groups in vulnerable situations to access (clean) energy.
 - Lead the way to **make accessible sustainable mobility a reality for all in the EU** through adequate investment in infrastructure and affordability measures.
-

CIVIC SPACE AND CIVIL DIALOGUE

- Introduce a **European strategy for civil society** to ensure an enabling environment characterised by fundamental freedoms, protection mechanisms and ensure adequate, accessible and sustainable funding.
- Conclude an **EU inter-institutional agreement to promote meaningful and structural civil dialogue**. Ensure that the proposed EU Civil Society Platform is a first step in this direction for all policy areas, and it is developed through collaboration with civil society organisations.
- The **involvement of CSOs in the negotiations for the accession to the EU in candidate countries** is an essential element for a rights-based and democratic enlargement of the EU. Make it compulsory for candidate countries to meaningfully involve CSOs in national policymaking in the framework of their accession process.

The recommendations are organised into categories following the structure of the SRM. However, they should all be understood as transversal and intersectional. Just Transition is the category underlining the links between specific green and social measures in this Monitor but is also the overarching objective SOLIDAR strives for of ensuring that all climate and environmental policies are designed to also tackle inequalities and enhance rights and vice versa.

Scan to read
the full SRM



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