



THE 'SEMESTER ALLIANCE' AND OUR KEY MESSAGES

What we want

The EU Alliance for a democratic, social and sustainable European Semester (EU Semester Alliance) is a broad coalition bringing together 15 major European-wide civil society organizations and trade unions. It aims to support progress towards a more democratic, social and sustainable Europe 2020, by strengthening civil dialogue engagement in the Semester at national and EU levels. It builds on an ad-hoc coalition which has been operating since 2012 and is currently funded for 1 year under the framework of a Joint Action, supported by the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation Call (VP/2013/006).

Who we are

Age Platform Europe, Caritas Europe, Housing Europe, Eurochild, Eurodiaconia, European Anti-Poverty Network, European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD), European Environmental Bureau (EEB), European Federation of Food Banks (FEBA), European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless (FEANTSA), European Public Service Union (EPSU), European Trade Union Congress (ETUC), European Women's Lobby (EWL), Green Budget Europe and Platform for International Cooperation on undocumented migrants (PICUM), supported also by Social Platform.

What we've done

Current 1 year Alliance project based on joint cross-sectoral engagement and assessments at the EU and national level. This has included at EU level: Advocacy and [common inputs and positions](#): Alternative proposals on Country-specific Recommendations, an assessment of the Semester and contribution to Europe 2020 Mid-Term Review, capacity building and tool kit, 2 joint hearings (the next to be held on the 3rd December in the European Parliament), and at national level – the development of 3 pilot cross-sectoral alliances in Bulgaria, Denmark and Ireland to engage in the European Semester.

Key learning

- **The difficulties of engaging in the Semester as civil society**, in an increasingly non-transparent process.
- **The challenge of interesting people at the national level**, who see lack of positive results on their lives.
- **Key value-added of cross-sectoral working**, promoting innovative solutions for a broader social, inclusive and sustainable agenda, but need for EU and national financial and other support.

The Alliance for a Democratic, Social and Sustainable European Semester (Semester Alliance) is a broad coalition bringing together major European civil-society organisations and trade unions, representing thousands of member organisations on the ground at European, national and local levels in the European Union. It aims to support progress towards a more democratic, social and sustainable Europe 2020 Strategy, through strengthening civil dialogue engagement in the European Semester at national and EU levels.

ENABLING CIVIL-SOCIETY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SHAPING OF EU POLICIES AND TO CONTRIBUTE TO PROGRESS ON THE TARGETS OF THE EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY CONCERNS US ALL!

<http://semesteralliance.net> | [#semesteralliance](#)

The Semester Alliance is coordinated by the European Anti-Poverty Network



KEY MESSAGES

1. AGS 2015: Where are the Europe 2020 goals of sustainable and inclusive growth?

The AGS focus on a 315 bn, market-led investment plan with more structural reform and austerity, offers little hope of progress on Europe 2020 poverty, social and environmental targets, or tangible results to citizens.

2. EU Guidelines to ensure structured dialogue with stakeholders and partnership with Parliament.

The AGS 2015 calls for more ownership/legitimacy with stakeholders and national parliaments. Obligatory Guidelines are needed to ensure genuine accountability and meaningful dialogue with civil society organizations and trade unions, making national and European Parliament equal partners.

3. Refocus European Semester on balanced Europe 2020 agenda to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and equality, including gender.

The Semester is overly focussed on economic governance and austerity. It must affirm its commitment to Europe 2020 goals and targets to deliver long-term prosperity, sustainable development and social justice, based on fundamental rights for all.

4. A European Semester, backed by integrated strategies including 'Social Investment, More and Better Jobs, Environmentally Sustainable Development and Gender Equality'.

Europe 2020 targets, particularly on poverty, employment, education and training, climate change and energy efficiency provide a strong coherent agenda, but these must be more clearly backed by integrated strategies for delivery. These must mainstream existing EU approaches developed in key Commission documents, which reflect the kind of society and economy that Europeans want.

5. Greater coherence and transparency in decision-making process and in delivery of Country-specific Recommendations based on the Europe 2020 goals.

The Semester is currently a closed process between Commission and Member States, overly-dominated by Ministries and DGs focussing on macroeconomic and fiscal surveillance. A clear link must be demonstrated between the CSRs and Europe 2020, more faithfully balancing the evidence of economic, social, equality and environmental data and balanced roles for social and environmental officers/bodies.

6. Ex-ante social, environmental + gender impact assessments and revised indicators.

The lack of coherence between economic, social and environmental policies could be strongly improved by embedding effective processes for ex-ante assessments in the policy making process, to prevent negative policy decisions being made which undermine the core objectives and generate greater challenges and costs in the medium and long term.

7. Improved links between European Semester and European Funds, particularly Structural Funds.

European Structural and Innovation funds are meant to support Europe 2020 goals. This commitment must be fully operationalized and monitored, together with stakeholders and Parliament. Funds should be made available to support engagement in the Semester process at national level.

For more information on the Semester Alliance, see: <http://semesteralliance.net>

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