CARES Report Launch

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Eurobarometer Youth Survey (16-30 yo)

Published on 17.2.2025

40%
Rising prices and the cost of living

29%
Social protection, welfare and access to healthcare

1/3
Environment and climate change

27%
Education and training

31%
The economic situation and job creation

23%
Housing and accommodation

What should be the EU's priority over the next 5 years?

Source: Cost of living and environment are the main concerns of young people in the EU | News | European Parliament

What about poverty?

Poverty and measures to tackle it are subject of debate and policy initiatives at EU level too.

Some progress was made over the past 10 years:

- 2023 - 94.6 million people (21% of the population, EU-27) were at risk of poverty or social exclusion

- 2015 - 105 million people (24%, EU-27) lived in households experiencing at least one of the three poverty and social exclusion risks (i.e. risk of poverty, severe material and social deprivation, and/or living in a household with very low work intensity)

BUT no progress since 2020

94.5 million people (21.5%) were at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

A multi-dimensional phenomenon

- **Traditional recipe** – All efforts focused on bringing people to the labour market > does not work.
- **Averages in policy-making** – Hide hardship and neglect a very large group below the average.
- **Poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon** > requires a muti-faceted approach:

1. Decent jobs and decent wages: access to jobs with decent working conditions including health at work and stable and fair contracts. Fair wages above the poverty line, even if it is a minimum wage. i.e. 10 % of workers in the EU are 'working poor'.

2. Minimum standard of living: When working age people are temporarily or permanently unable to work, they must receive accessible and adequate support (financial and through enabling services) to secure a minimum standard of living, respecting their human dignity.

3. Social protection and pension systems: Working conditions and wages determine these elements, thus may contribute to perpetuate the poverty cycle beyond the working age and for those unable to work and their families.

International frameworks

European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR)
"Everyone lacking sufficient resources has the right to adequate minimum income benefits ensuring a life in dignity at all stages of life, and effective access to enabling goods and services. For those who can work, minimum income benefits should be combined with incentives to (re)integrate into the labour market.

Revised European Social Charter
Article 13§1 provides for the right to benefits, for which individual need is the main criterion for eligibility and which are payable to any person on the sole ground that he or she is in need.

Agenda 2030, SDG 1 – End Poverty
Strong social protection systems are essential for mitigating the effects and preventing many people from falling into poverty.

EU anti-poverty Strategy

1. Guiding principles

- Focus on reducing and preventing poverty, in full respect of human dignity > the objective of the EU anti-poverty strategy should not be to contribute to increasing competitiveness.

- Respect of European Pillar for Social Rights and international legal frameworks, e.g. Revised European Social Charter, Agenda 2030.

- Adequate funding to implement the anti-poverty strategy.

- Ensure participation of people experiencing poverty and civil society in the development, monitoring and evaluation of relevant policies.

- Guarantee equal treatment and non-discrimination.

EU anti-poverty Strategy

2. Policy initiatives

- **Adequate and accessible social benefits:** close monitoring of the Council Recommendation of 2023 on adequate minimum income

- ➤ Recommendation has little impact. Even several Member States have reduced the quality of their minimum income systems, e.g. eligibility and/or adequacy, conditionality.
- ➤ European Commission should aim for a framework directive establishing basic standards for minimum income systems.

- Active **labour market inclusion** with quality jobs and fair and safe conditions

- Support low-threshold **social counselling services**

- Ensure **affordable housing** and prevent homelessness

- Correct **data collection** and improve the EU AROPE indicator

EU anti-poverty Strategy

3. Mainstream efforts into other EU-policies

- Prevent negative impact of planned fiscal policy measures – austerity on people experiencing poverty > before deciding conduct a poverty impact assessment. Compensating measures to address the negative impact on people experiencing poverty.

- Child Guarantee and Youth Guarantee

- European Affordable Housing Plan

- Food supply and security

- Free movement and mobile EU citizens

- Energy/climate policies > a just transition, leaving nobody behind

- Digital policy > ensuring technology serves the common good, aligning ethics and digitalisation, preventing digital exclusion, data protection and biases.

- State aid law and procurement > the rules should not prevent Member States from decently subsidising enabling social services

Addressing challenges

- Advancing social justice while safeguarding existing rights that are under threat.

- **Cost of living crisis:** lower purchasing power of households.

- **Aging population:** aging with dignity, long-term care, healthcare systems.

- **Generational contract:** resources need to be addressed fairly across generations. It requires contributions, but also social protection.

- **Impact of AI:** The influence on the world of work and service provision is growing; technology is not neutral and should not be controlled by a few.

- **Climate emergency:** To be tackled, but also an opportunity to innovate - policies addressing environmental concerns while promoting social equity.

Just demographic, ecological, and digital transition. Advancing a social, inclusive and democratic agenda that considers both, the ecological ceiling and the social safety net.

Social justice goes beyond equity and solidarity—it is a fundamental stability and safety pillar of our democracies.

Thank you!

"Without a solution to the problems of the poor, we will not solve the problems of the world."

- Pope Francis