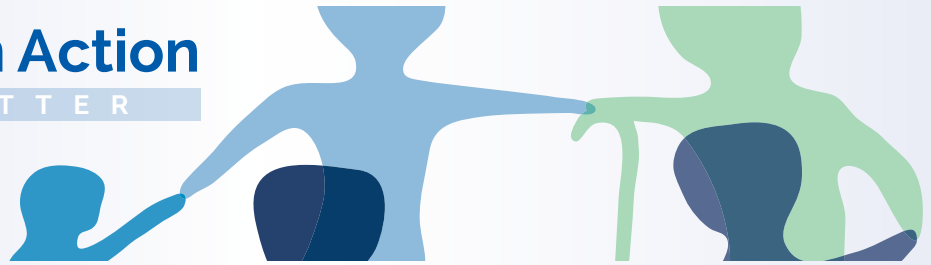




SOCIEUX in Action

NEWSLETTER



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Work with us

SOCIEUX is currently searching for social protection and employment and labour practitioners to collaborate with us as potential experts. Interested candidates from EU Member States or partner countries, public administrations or mandated bodies are invited to send their application. Please download the [Guide for Experts](#) and [Application Form](#) from our website or contact the **SOCIEUX** team at contact@socieux.eu.

ec.europa.eu/europeaid/socieux

Introduction of mandatory health insurance in Azerbaijan

The healthcare system in Azerbaijan still bears the key characteristics of an Soviet Semashko model with highly centralised planning, public ownership of health facilities and input-based allocation of resources. The public health providers, as state institutions, have comparatively limited financial, institutional and managerial autonomy.

Azerbaijan is aiming to equip itself with mandatory social health insurance system through comprehensive reforms for:

- ♦ Modernisation, accessibility and equal distribution of health service and insurance benefits throughout the country;
- ♦ Better use of hospitals and healthcare providers;
- ♦ More comprehensive legal framework for healthcare;
- ♦ Improved healthcare management;
- ♦ Improved institutional capacities to reshape healthcare.

Preparatory work for the introduction of mandatory health insurance in Azerbaijan is carried out in cooperation with SOCIEUX, the Social Protection EU Expertise in Development Cooperation. The European expertise mobilised by SOCIEUX supported the evaluation of the Azerbaijani healthcare system, and delivered better technical and institutional strategies.

SOCIEUX's short term peer-to-peer expertise is transferred EU's best practices in healthcare financing and mandatory health insurance, which fed in the updating of the Action Plan and Concept for Health Financing Reforms. An upcoming mission will also transfer and assess the appropriateness and feasibility of the introduction of pay-for-performance mechanisms in the future healthcare financing system.

Mr. Aysel Ibayeva
Legal Department

State Agency for Mandatory Health Insurance (SAMHI)

SOCIEUX is governed by a **Programme Steering Committee** composed of members of the European Commission and a Consortium of partners from the EU Member States working in social protection and international cooperation.

SOCIEUX is implemented by the following Consortium:

Gesellschaft für
Versicherungswissenschaft
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giz Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

**EXPERTISE
FRANCE**

FIAPP COOPERACIÓN ESPAÑOLA



EU expertise contributes to health reforms in Azerbaijan

Baku, April to September 2016. - *SOCIEUX is collaborating with the Government of Azerbaijan to introduce a mandatory health insurance system and implement health financing reforms in the country. The missions have focused on presenting EU best practices, primarily from former Soviet republics. Now the State Agency for Mandatory Health Insurance (SAMHI) must create the conditions required for a transition.*

Earlier this year, the Government of Azerbaijan asked the State Agency for Mandatory Health Insurance (SAMHI), under the supervision of the Cabinet of Ministers, to lead the reforms required for implementation of a health financing reform and introduce mandatory health insurance. It was during these discussions on health management systems and financing mechanisms and on how to plan the process that SOCIEUX began providing support, focussing, above all, on sharing lessons learned in EU countries, and more specifically in post-Soviet states.

Over the course of various workshops and meetings, the SOCIEUX experts dealt with issues such as the advantages of establishing mandatory health insurance, in terms of social benefits -achieving equality and equity regarding access to healthcare- and economic advantages -ability to predict income and therefore to strengthen budgets. From a health management point of view, it means simplification of processes and a decrease in the number of free-riders -those who reap benefit from a healthcare system without having paid into it-.

Other issues under discussion included the scope of the population coverage (beneficiaries, either the individual or the family dependents), who would have to pay into it, so as to achieve a fair balance between employers' and individuals' contributions and avoid co-payment. Reimbursement models for providers were also discussed as well as how service packages can be determined.

The establishment and financing of health insurance requires realistic planning headed by a strong institution. Therefore, the first step in SOCIEUX support was to provide the SAMHI with the information needed for the creation of an Action Plan and guidelines for institutional reinforcement. The SAMHI now has enough information to choose its model, from the experience -successful or otherwise- of EU member states with similar historical and socio-economic background.

The coming months are now crucial in terms of designing the SAMHI's Action Plan. For future support, SOCIEUX has already planned to provide expertise to develop a comprehensive methodology for the performance assessment and monitoring of healthcare providers.



SOCIEUX experts meet the SAMHI officials

Experts mobilised

- ♦ **Mrs. Erica Richardson**, Research Officer, European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, UK
- ♦ **Mr. Andrei Tretyak**, Head of Social Protection Unit, Expertise France
- ♦ **Mr. Michel Villac**, National Agency for Social Cohesion and Equal Opportunities, France

The expert's point of view

"Primary care is the core of the health system"

Mrs. Erica Richardson,

Research Officer, European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, UK

SOCIEUX (S): What has your experience as an expert with SOCIEUX been? What key practices did you bring from previous EU experiences and countries that underwent under transition?

Erica Richardson (E.R.): It was a great honour for me to work with SAMHI colleagues as a part of this collaboration and to be a small part of such an important reform for Azerbaijan. When sharing the experience of other countries in

the post-Soviet region, we talked mostly about how some countries had approached the initial designing of benefits packages and how they implemented social health insurance financing models with a view to achieving universal health coverage. We also discussed the importance of choosing the right financing mechanisms to achieve the aims of the reform programme to improve efficiency and ensure equity.

S: You have stated that an essential step in establishing a consistent public health system is to reinforce primary level care. Could you explain why?

E.R.: Primary care is the core of the health system - it is the first point of contact so it needs to be accessible, comprehensive, high-quality and well-coordinated in order to best meet the long-term health needs of the population. Strengthening primary care is important because population health needs are changing as long-term, chronic conditions now account for most of the disease burden in high- and middle-income countries. Providing easy access to a range of services appropriate to the commonly encountered problems in the population and coordinating other specialist care is therefore the best way to meet the health needs of the Azerbaijani population, but it is also a more efficient use of resources given that highly specialized and inpatient care services are much more expensive to provide.

S: What other key elements does a country need in the transition from a centrally-planned healthcare model to a mandatory health insurance system with decentralised services?

E.R.: The main technical challenges countries need to take into overcome

when moving from a centrally-planned, managed and financed system to a mandatory health insurance funded system with a splitting of purchasing and provision of services is to ensure effective regulation of the system to safeguard the quality and accessibility to healthcare services. Data generated in the system should be 'fit for purpose' and actually be used to improve the overall efficiency of funds for health. The key political challenge is to ensure in at term universal health coverage, as the introduction of a limited social health insurance (only based on payroll contributions) creates an explicit uninsured population if dependents, the informal sector and non-working people (pensioners, children, people with disabilities, etc.) are not covered through cross-subsidisation or from other financial sources such as general taxation.

S: In a few words, what are the advantages to establishing mandatory health insurance system in the case of Azerbaijan?

E.R.: Establishing mandatory health insurance in Azerbaijan has the potential to improve transparency in the system. Establishing an explicit package of benefits would enable the state guarantees to match the level of state funding for the health system. Changing the financing mechanisms to pay service providers on the basis of what they actually do rather than their capacity also has the potential to improve transparency as well as the overall efficiency of the system. All of these changes could be implemented without the introduction of mandatory health insurance, but the move to social health insurance, which is what mandatory health insurance is about, is also often a political decision to signal a move away from the old Soviet way of doing things.

The view of our partners

The SOCIEUX experts presented their recommendations for phased transition towards mandatory health insurance to the SAMHI management team, representatives from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Finance, and service providers.

Among other present officials were the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Ali Ahmadov, who emphasised that the implementation of a compulsory medical insurance system in Azerbaijan is intended "to improve citizens' welfare and the overall social status of the country. With the introduction of compulsory medical insurance, we will achieve a more widespread application of the principles of social justice."

"Furthermore," he added, that "the experience of the world's leading countries has been taken into account, and now European experts have been invited to our country in order to shape Azerbaijan's future."

SOCIEUX at the Asia-Pacific Social Protection week

Manila, 1 to 5th August 2016. - *Government representatives, policymakers, researchers and practitioners gathered in Manila for the Asia-Pacific Social Protection week (APSPW 2016) to discuss recent issues affecting social protection in the region's low- and middle-income countries, showcasing success stories from countries at different stages of development of their social protection systems. The APSPW 2016 was organised by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and SOCIEUX participated and contributed to the event by mobilising EU experts as speakers and resource persons.*

In the Asia and the Pacific region many countries have embarked on a journey to create and finance social protection programmes but social protection systems, in general, are still emerging or maturing. The week-long regional conference was designed to bring-in expertise within and outside region to share experiences and best practices in establishing comprehensive and sustainable social protection systems. SOCIEUX contributed to two main discussion topics: creating fiscal space for social protection during financial crisis, and expanding social protection systems to informal workers.

The event hosted discussions on how social protection plays an essential role in social and economic development, especially in times of financial crisis. In this sense, SOCIEUX mobilised expert Michel Rovers noted how crises often prompt government policy changes and that, even in times of economic recession, investing in social protection stimulates economic growth and prevents further deterioration. Social protection is a way of encouraging economic growth, but there needs to be a long-term, sustainable vision that accounts for emergency situations. On the other hand, Carlos Garcia de Cortázar underlined the need to focus not only on the financial sustainability of social protection but also the adequacy of coverage in social protection discussions.

Discussions helped countries recognise challenges and discuss ways to address constraints by building technical and administrative capacities. All in all, comprehensive social protections systems are recognised as main contributors to inclusive growth and hence one of the best ways to ensure that inequality, poverty and vulnerability are reduced, while ensuring no one is left behind.



SOCIEUX experts Carlos Garcia de Cortazar (left) and Michel Rovers (right)

The way forward

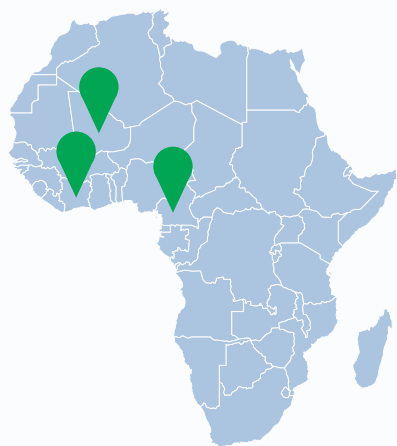
The final day of the week-long conference was dedicated to presenting priority actions for sustainable, efficient and equitable social protection around five main areas:

- ♦ *Sustainable financing of Social Protection*, which requires strong political will and a state intervention that diversifies methods;
- ♦ *Improving the delivery and governance of Social Protection*, by developing inclusive and institutionalised policy frameworks;
- ♦ *Information and communication technology investments for Social Protection*, by enabling infrastructures for effective service delivery and building transversal national identity databases;
- ♦ *Better monitoring Social Protection programmes*, with a clear set of goals, targets and guidelines, building capacity for collecting, processing and disseminating data;
- ♦ *Promoting Social Protection for older people*.

For more information on the APSW 2016 click [HERE](#).

Experts mobilised

- ♦ **Mr. Michel Rovers**, Director of the Strategy, Policy and Research Department of the Dutch Institute for Employee Benefit Schemes
- ♦ **Mr. Carlos García de Cortázar**, Assistant Director-General of Social Affairs, Education, Culture, Health and Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Spain



Strengthening social assistance in Ivory Coast

Abidjan, June 2016. - *SOCIEUX is supporting the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection (MEPS) in the ambitious task of reinforcing the country's social assistance sector. Work is now focused on drawing up proposals for revamping social centres, in order to improve the range of social services available to citizens.*

In previous missions, the SOCIEUX experts produced a comprehensive report on the operation and distribution of social centres in Ivory Coast. A series of adjustment measures, including references to their organisational structure and competences, has now been drawn-up based on this report. The main areas of improvement include creating a Human Resources Policy, nurturing professional social workers' skills through capacity-building, and making progress in terms of statistical data collection and analysis.

The experts also developed community operating procedures based on the day-to-day realities of local areas and their challenges. Social centres should be officially recognised for their role as local operators in social assistance and their extended role as interface institutions between citizens and Operator Network Organisers responsible for identifying and supporting highly vulnerable people.

Although social centres are well distributed throughout the country, the creation of more centres in most densely populated regions is recommended. In this sense, SOCIEUX was further requested to provide technical assistance in consolidating a unified framework for a fair territorial distribution.

Experts deployed

- ♦ **Ms. Cécile Chaumin-Ernst**, retired Chief Inspector of Health and Social Affairs, France
- ♦ **Mr. François Sentis**, Chief Executive Director, Regional Institute of Social Work for the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur and Corsica region, France

The view of our partners

"SOCIEUX's missions have enabled the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection to rethink the objectives set for social centres in relation to the current context characterised by the resurgence of existing and emerging vulnerabilities. The newly drafted terms of reference [for social centres] will help the Ministry to reorganise its social services with a view to bringing them further in line with the concerns of grassroots populations".

Mr. Amara Coulibaly
Director-General of Social Action

In the words of the experts

What makes a good SOCIEUX expert?

"Experts have to be attentive to partners' requests, specify priorities with them and clearly define their expectations. They should immerse themselves as much as possible in the local culture in order, despite the short duration of missions and projects, to learn as much as possible about the partners and the challenges and opportunities of their environment, without forgetting to take into account any risks and constraints. Moreover, experts should refrain from imposing solutions, stay critical of their own models and practices, be open to partners' suggestions and validate each stage alongside partners.

In Ivory Coast, as part of the SOCIEUX action to support the reform of basic social centres, this collaboration is very close. The activities are very well monitored and supported by the EU Delegation in Abidjan, which is an indispensable point of reference for the experts".

Ms. Cécile Chaumin-Ernst

Healthcare coverage in Mali

Health insurance in Mali is fragmented among various bodies targeting specific population groups. This situation brings major challenges in coordinating policies, strategies and extension of coverage. The National Health Assistance Agency (*l'Agence nationale d'assistance médicale* - ANAM) manages schemes for the poor and vulnerable, whilst the National Health Insurance Fund (*la Caisse nationale d'assurance maladie* - CANAM) oversees mandatory health insurance for the formal sector.

Other key intuitions are the National Social Welfare Institute (*l'Institut national de prévoyance sociale* - INPS), the Malian Social Security Fund (*la Caisse malienne de sécurité sociale* - CMSS) and the Technical Union of Malian Mutual Insurers (*l'Union technique de la mutualité malienne* - UTM), which is the private mutual insurance body.

The view of our partners

"These missions have enabled us to develop our strategic thinking and to have a clearer idea of what the UTM's stance should be on its mission to reinforce its members and collaborate with all of them in finding means and resources to consolidate their operations.

Having a first draft of the 2017-2019 Strategic Plan will give the UTM a reference in terms of planning and restructuring, and a tool for negotiating with its different partners, primarily with the State".

M. Issa Sissouma, Director-General, UTM

Mali prepares for the extension of health coverage

Bamako, May and June 2016.- *SOCIEUX continues its collaboration with the Technical Union of Malian Mutual Insurers (UTM), the organisation tasked with extending health coverage to the informal sector in Mali. Technical assistance is being provided to put forward recommendations, both in terms of the UTM's internal management and with regard to the support provided to member mutual health insurers (MHI).*

The 10-year Health and Social Development Plan of the Malian Government set the objective to extend population coverage by MHIs from 5% to 20% by 2023. The UTM is one of the bodies contributing to this objective. Its main task is to promote the creation of new MHIs and to provide technical support and supervision to existing ones. MHIs mainly work in rural areas, mainly relying on agriculture for living. The UTM is currently redefining its strategy, in order to get a better foothold in the demanding path towards universal coverage.

SOCIEUX has provided expertise for the creation of a 5-year Strategic Development Plan of the UTM, based on a highly detailed SWOT analysis, which divides the organisation's activities into technical support to MHIs, health insurance management, and representation of the MHI sector. As a result of this strategic diagnosis, the experts recommended to:

- ♦ In terms of its role in providing technical support to MHIs: redefine its mandate, sign collaboration agreements between bodies and sharing best practices including on monitoring and evaluation.
- ♦ For health insurance management: strengthen the UTM capacities, both at head office and at local level.
- ♦ Lastly, to keep in mind that restructuring of the MHI sector is required for the UTM to properly serve its role as spokesperson and representative of the MHIs.

The Strategic Plan allows the UTM to rethink its strategic vision and to reinforce its mission and position in the framework of Malian healthcare towards an effective universal health coverage.

Experts deployed

- ♦ **Mr. Bouchaib Mourjane**, Director General, General Mutual for National Education, Morocco
- ♦ **Mr. Michel Vigneul**, Actuarial Advisor and Project Manager, COOPAMI, Belgium

The point of view of the experts

"It has been a very enriching experience to participate in this process, which has required trust, professional integrity and empathy - all of which are vital ingredients for exchanging experiences among peers. The involvement of managers, executives and members of the Board of Directors of the UTM was undoubtedly a decisive factor in its success."

Mr. Bouchaib Mourjane

First International Forum on Pensions in West and Central Africa

Yaoundé (Cameroon), 27 to 29 July 2016. - *The objective of the first International Forum on Pensions in Central and West African countries has been to carry out in-depth analysis of factors of financial viability of pension systems, and to propose relevant reform strategies and approaches. SOCIEUX provided two experts to speak on different European pension financing models and sharing best practices for the management of pension funds.*

The CIPRES, the way forward

The first International Forum on Pensions unfolded over three days, during which a series and recommendations was adopted, including:

- ♦ to regularly evaluate the financial viability of pension systems and engage, if necessary, in multi-parameter reforms (age, contributions, duration, etc.);
- ♦ to examine how to promote complementary pensions (notably under a capitalization scheme) in order to ensure long-term financial sustainability and include a larger number of non-covered populations in the systems;
- ♦ to create autonomous pension funds for civil servants and public officials;
- ♦ to examine how to establish new methods of financing pension systems (by means of secure reserve investments);
- ♦ to reinforce systems' governance and autonomy, relations with stakeholders (civil society, insurance providers, etc.), capacities, and attractiveness.

For further information: www.lacipres.org



A SOCIEUX team of experts attended the CIPRES conference

Pension systems in the *Conférence Inter-africaine de la Prévoyance Sociale* (CIPRES) area, which includes 16 French-speaking West and Central African countries facing similar socio-economic and structural constraints. The main challenges identified during the Forum concern the limited population coverage (10% on average), the financial sustainability of pension systems, administrative shortcomings in terms of capacities and tools, and the dependency on social determinants as demographic trends and the employment situation.

In this context, more than 200 participants involved in managing pension systems in the CIPRES area contributed to the debate on how to design approaches based on a multi-pillar perspective incorporating complementary pensions, and exchanged ideas on approaches to extend schemes to include the informal sector. The two European experts mobilised by SOCIEUX spoke about various financing models in both the public and private sectors, in order to identify best practices from a legal, organisational and functional point of view, for the management of specific pension funds for civil servants and public employees.

As a result of the Forum's discussions, the member states of the CIPRES now have a mapping pension schemes in their zone, which should enable them to work on comprehensive and coherent reform strategies to strengthen financing and improve the pension benefits offered.

Experts deployed

- ♦ **Mr. Hagen Hügelschäffer**, Director of the AKA, the German Association of Local Public and Church Pension
- ♦ **Mr. Antero Kiviniemi**, Counsellor at the Permanent Representation of Finland to the EU

In the words of the experts

"The sharing of experiences of EU member states in the field of pensions may well broaden the knowledge of those who attended. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that no practice is automatically transferable and that a thorough analysis of each country concerned and respective pension institution is required."

Mr. Hagen Hügelschäffer & Mr. Antero Kiviniemi



The **Department for Social Prosperity** is the result of a merger between the Special Administrative Unit for Territorial Consolidation (UACT) and the National Agency for Overcoming Extreme Poverty (ANSPE), an organisation with which SOCIEUX began collaborating in 2015. As a body that coordinates and implements public policies for the social inclusion of the country's poorest and most disadvantaged inhabitants, it will have a leading role in the reintegration of displaced persons following the peace agreements.

The view of our partners

"The collaboration with SOCIEUX has been pertinent and opportune given [the Department of] Social Prosperity's needs. The flexibility in the design and methodology of the missions has created a close working dynamic with the experts. The experts demonstrated extensive experience, and the fact that they came from different countries enriched team discussions on good practices. [The Department of] Social Prosperity has undoubtedly succeeded in carrying out this self-assessment exercise and recognising the opportunities for improvement in its processes".

Ms. Diana Carolina Cabrera Moreno.
Dirección de Gestión y Articulación de
Oferta Social

Support to the Colombian Department for Social Prosperity

Bogotá, Colombia, May to September 2016. - *SOCIEUX has resumed its collaboration with the Department for Social Prosperity, a body considered key in the reintegration of displaced persons following the signing of the peace accords. The assistance provided has tackled transversal issues such as improving process coordination, targeting the beneficiary population, and the monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes.*

The current political situation, and the context of drastic budget cuts, has forced the Department for Prosperity to ensure optimal coordination and communication between departments, with a view to improving its operating processes. Moreover, other issues explored include improving population and geographical targeting, and potential adjustments to the programmes' exit-criteria, using the cash transfer programme *Más Familias en Acción* as an example.

Practical training workshops on public policy and programme evaluation methodology were also carried out. In this regard, the experts said that in Colombia the public policy design process is centralised, technical and, logically, enables strategic objectives to be set. Nonetheless, the process is unable to anticipate certain implementation problems, such as the resistance of other organisations that did not participate in it. From working on programme evaluation models, the most important recommendation would seem to be not to limit evaluation to quantitative impact assessment alone - as has been the case until now -, but also to analyse the implementation process with qualitative methods.

The recent analysis of information systems, following which it is expected that a roadmap will be drawn up, ends the assistance provided to the Department for Social Prosperity.



Experts deployed

- ♦ **Mr. Jaume Blasco**, Social Protection Programme Evaluation Consultant, Spain
- ♦ **Ms. Priscilia Decoupled**, Coordinator of the Research Managers Network and Head of the training group at the French National Family Allowances Fund (CNAF)
- ♦ **Ms. Susana Gámez**, Social Protection Consultant, Dominican Republic

In the words of the experts

Why is programme evaluation important?

"Evaluation involves questioning the ability of public policies and programmes to produce the desired changes in terms of the social needs that they should achieve. By asking evaluative questions, we recognise our limited information, which, in addition to being honest, is the foundation of operational research, involving thinking up and trying out innovative solutions until we find one that is good enough.

Secondly, and always with limitations, evaluation generates results that come to be like "pieces of knowledge", which rarely answer the question of whether the programme "works", but which do give us some pointers that we should use to steer policy reform, improve processes and provide for political debate".

Mr. Jaume Blasco

SOCIEUX's collaborative institutions. Why engage with SOCIEUX?

SOCIEUX's actions not only provide our partners with technical assistance, but also prove a rewarding experience for European civil servants. Peer-to-peer exchanges facilitate learning, understanding, knowledge acquisition and the establishment of links between professionals, institutions and countries. SOCIEUX currently has collaborative institutions in all 28 member states of the European Union, in all areas of social protection. Institutions working in the areas of social protection and employment and labour in the EU Member States can contact us to find out how to cooperate with SOCIEUX.



Ms. Rita Skrebiskiene

Head of
International Affairs
Department,
Lithuanian Ministry
of Social Security
and Labour

SOCIEUX (S): How does the Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour benefit from collaborating with SOCIEUX?

Rita Skrebiskiene (R.S.): The answer to this question is best defined in the SOCIEUX mission: to support the efforts of partner countries to better design and manage social protection systems. Life is rapidly changing, and we all, including Lithuania, are tackling fundamental economic problems, including unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. New challenges are emerging, and we therefore need to build on the experience of other countries and other professionals, in addition to our own expertise; after all, they say that "it is better to learn from the mistakes of others than our own". SOCIEUX provides a learning opportunity, albeit more from good practices and acquired knowledge than from mistakes.

S: How would Lithuanian experts benefit?

R.S.: Lithuanian experts have been doing a great job recently, preparing the innovative legal administrative model of labour relations and state social security. This is the so-called New Social Model, whereby we seek to increase employment, improve regulation of labour relations, ensure the sustainability of the social insurance system and

reduce social exclusion. Therefore, our specialists are interested in international systemic approaches to social systems, continued labour market reforms and developing adequate and sustainable social security.

S: Given the continuous and recent reforms in social protection in the country, what can Lithuania specifically offer in expertise?

R.S.: The scope of policy responsibility of our Ministry includes family and children, social insurance and pensions, labour and employment, social integration, youth, the non-governmental sector and gender equality, and therefore we are in a position to offer very diverse support. I would like to express my pride in our experts who have extensive national and international experience. Looking back at the recent reforms, these demonstrate that we are capable of advising on labour and social insurance issues.

S: What is your overall opinion of SOCIEUX?

R.S.: I think it is a unique instrument, as its core element is targeted and specific support is provided by experts. These experts possess valuable knowledge and experience, both at national and international levels, and are familiar with both good and bad practices. Short-term but multiple missions to partner countries are an excellent opportunity to both deliver expertise and assess how it is implemented. It is extremely commendable that SOCIEUX uses a varied approach: fact-finding missions, training sessions, study visits and many other methods. Supplementing the scope of SOCIEUX with labour policy will only add value to this instrument.



Ms. Karin Dobberschütz

Head of International
Department at AOK
International Consulting,
[German] Federal
Association of General
Local Sickness Funds

SOCIEUX (S): How would the AOK benefit from collaborating with SOCIEUX?

Karin Dobberschütz (K.D.): The AOK is actually providing similar services but at German level only - we offer the expertise of the social health insurance federation "AOK" to international projects, mainly in low and medium developed countries. We support so support our partners in developing healthcare systems and social health insurance. The AOK itself would like to exchange knowledge and get its staff even more involved in the social healthcare in Germany and abroad. We are convinced that SOCIEUX and its approach are a good way to bring technical experts together in a peer-to-peer context to weave a global network- all the more since we carry out a similar task with the same goal, albeit on a smaller scale...

S: How would German experts benefit?

K.D.: The experts we have put forward are in fact AOK staff. These experts would like to bring their knowledge and expertise of the German healthcare and social health insurance system to other countries. This would give them a deeper insight into the functioning and interactions of social protection systems, which would be useful for their further work in Germany and professional development. Moreover, this would provide a change from their daily work while still focusing on the same technical area.

S: What is the AOK's area of expertise in social protection?

K.D.: Social health insurance, social health care systems, health care policy, health care system reforms, financing of stationary and ambulatory care, DRGs, quality management, etc.

Other ongoing actions

SOCIEUX currently has a long list of technical assistance collaboration projects, with the following institutions:

Latin-America and the Caribbean

- ♦ **Mexico** - The Social Security Institute of the State of Guanajuato (ISSEG), in the creation of a National Council, a General Pensions Law and a single pension registry in Mexico. SOCIEUX also participated in the National Social Security Week, an initiative of the Senate with the objective of analysing the Latinamerican situation in the field of social insurance.
- ♦ **St. Kitts and Nevis** – SOCIEUX is advising the Department of Social Services of the Nevis Island Administration (NIA) at the Ministry of Social Development in strengthening the capacities of social assistance workers and supervisors in the implementation of the Restore, Inspire, Secure and Empower (RISE) Families Programme.

Africa

- ♦ **Gabon** - The National Social Assistance Fund (Fonds National d'Aide Sociale – FNAS) to provide capacity-building support for assessing, monitoring and evaluating income-generating activities (IGAs) projects. A preparatory mission identified the creation of a strategic plan to guide actions and define monitoring and evaluation indicators of the structure in its current form, and of its subsidised microcredit activity, as a prerequisite. Other needs include capacity-building in the creation of a logical framework matrix, portfolio and incident management.
- ♦ **Ghana's** Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) in drawing up the National Social Protection Policy. Future assistance may include a review of institutional arrangements for the management of social protection in Ghana at national,

regional and community levels and the development of an effective communication plan to launch the approved Social Protection strategy.

- ♦ **Togo's** National Health Insurance Institution (INAM), the Togolese Government's mandated body, in order to advise the organisation on the extension of health insurance coverage at national level. Assistance is aimed at developing a risk management strategy and an information system.
- ♦ The Centre for Research and Social Studies (CRES) in **Tunisia** to update its information system and improve data management and report procedures. In previous missions, work was carried out on effective report writing, using the 10 years of data available in the information system. When reports are written according to a precise and detailed methodology, they are easier to read, and, by extension, it is easier to make informed decisions – the CRES's ultimate goal.
- ♦ The **Zanzibar** Ministry of Empowerment, Social Welfare, Youth, Women and Children (MoESWYWC) in setting up a universal pension scheme for the elderly. The programme kicked-off in April of this year with 21,750 citizens aged 70 or over, listed as eligible for the 20,000 Tanzanian shillings (\$9) a month. The Universal Pension scheme is the first fully funded state pension in East Africa and has been supported by HelpAge. SOCIEUX has contributed to the creation of an implementation plan and will assess the MIS's needs to facilitate its distribution.

Middle East & Asia

- ♦ **Azerbaijan.** The Scientific Research and Training Centre on Labour and Social Problems (SCRTCLSP) through the exchange of European expertise on the good practices of research centres on social policy in EU Member States. The aim is to reinforce the SCRTCLSP so that it is better equipped to build the capacities of institutions in

Azerbaijan, disseminate knowledge and provide qualitative research to support policy-making.

- ♦ The Ministry of Economy and Finance (MoEF) of **Cambodia** in supporting the extension of social protection. During the course of a first fact-finding mission, a seminar on social assistance governance and financing was jointly organised by SOCIEUX, the ILO and UNICEF, during which best practices in social assistance governance and financing were presented. Future activities will be linked to the social inclusion of persons with disabilities.
- ♦ The **Jordanian** Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) in the development of its internal strategy and related Action Plan. Results of previous interventions include a detailed strategy which sets out principles, priorities and strategic objectives for the coming years, including a strategy for the professionalisation of social work as a key priority for the Ministry.
- ♦ The Agency of Social Insurance and Pensions (ASIP) of the **Republic of Tajikistan** in amending the Pension Law as part of the transition process towards a pension system based on a Notionally Defined Contribution scheme.
- ♦ The **Vietnam** Social Security Institution in its efforts to improve its human resource development plan. The experts are currently finalising their recommendations for monitoring actions.

Submit your request!

SOCIEUX targets public authorities and mandated bodies in charge of social protection and employment and labour at a national and regional level. Interested partners are invited to send their requests by email, letter or fax. Requests should give a brief outline of the area of assistance, needs and estimated timing. Please download the [SOCIEUX Guide for Partner Country Institutions](#) and [SOCIEUX Request Form](#) from our website and contact the **SOCIEUX** team at contact@socieux.eu.

SOCIEUX turns into SOCIEUX+

After three years of operations, SOCIEUX is scaling up into a broader facility, **SOCIEUX+**, which will include employment and labour in its areas of intervention. SOCIEUX+ will continue to provide most needed short-term technical assistance and, in addition, generate relevant knowledge to contribute to the strengthening of its partner institutions across the world.

The overall objective of SOCIEUX+ is to expand and improve access to better employment opportunities and inclusive social protection in EU partner countries. Its specific objective is to increase the capacities of partner countries and institutions to better design, manage and monitor inclusive, effective, and sustainable employment strategies and social protection systems.

SOCIEUX+ will foster its outcomes by combining:

- ✓ **Short-term technical assistance actions** provided by experts drawn from the EU Member States' public administrations and mandated bodies. It will also promote triangular cooperation in partnership with practitioners outside Europe.
- ✓ **Knowledge development** based activities, among others, on capitalisation of actions results carried out in the framework of the facility.

SOCIEUX+ will mainly target public authorities and mandated bodies at national, regional and local levels in the in the fields of labour, employment and social protection. Social partners (employers' and workers' organisations) involved in formal social dialogue will also be important stakeholders and could benefit from assistance provided by the project. The facility's geographical scope remains the same.

Partners

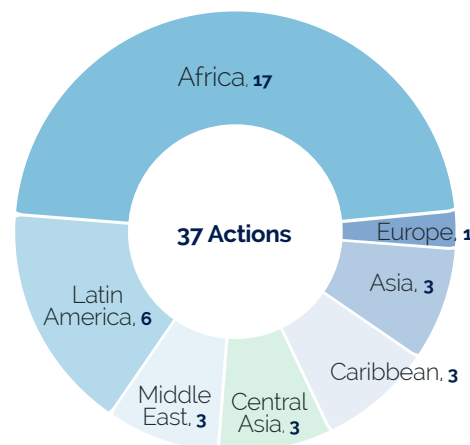
The facility will be implemented with financial support of EuropeAid and will be managed by a partnership of EU member state public specialised cooperation agencies: *Expertise France* (leading member), the *Fundación Internacional y para Iberoamérica de Administración y Políticas Públicas* (FIIAPP), *Belgian International Cooperation on Social Protection* (BELINCOSOC) and the *Belgian Development Agency* (BTC).

SOCIEUX+ is a direct continuation of the SOCIEUX facility and will actively contribute to EuropeAid's development cooperation in the fields of social protection and employment by providing partner countries and institutions across the world with the best expertise that the European Union has to offer.

SOCIEUX in numbers

The SOCIEUX facility started operations in **January 2014** with a request for undertaking an institutional assessment of the National Social Cash Transfers Secretariat of Liberia on the required capacity to scale up social its system of cash transfers nationwide. Since then, SOCIEUX carried out **37 actions** in **23 different countries** worldwide.

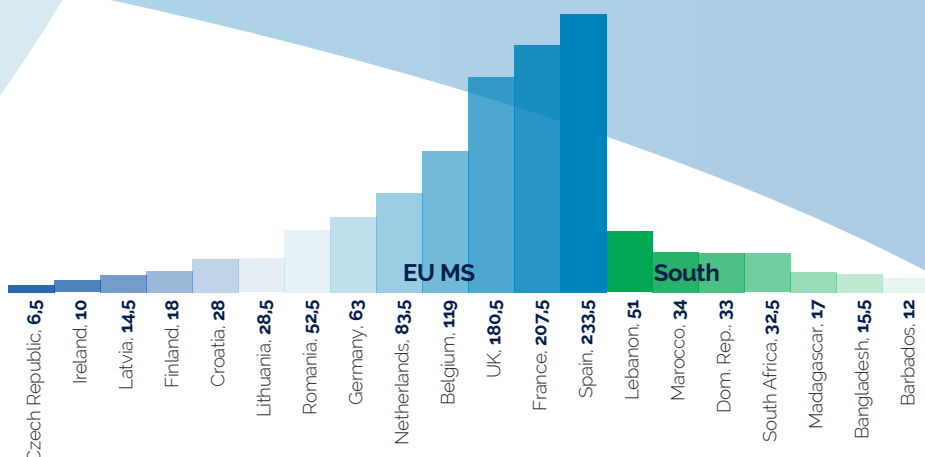
Number of actions per region



After this three-year period, SOCIEUX is recognised as an effective and flexible cooperation instrument in the area of social protection, having provided **1,240 days of expertise**, in a wide scope of areas in social assistance, social insurance and access to basic social services.

Its current pool of expertise includes over **300 experts** who can be rapidly mobilised to share knowledge and experience. Collaborative institutions include public administrations and mandated bodies in the **28 EU Member States** at national and regional level.

Days of technical provided by expert's country of origin



SOCIEUX - Social Protection EU Expertise in Development Cooperation

We are moving! New address: c/o SPF Sécurité sociale FPS Social Security
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