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Public services and the European Semester

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Brussels, October 2018**

- The European Semester – providing some context
- The 2017-18 cycle – what place Public Services?
- Reflections and questions



- Established in 2011 – post economic crisis
- Prior to the crisis budgetary policy and planning was the responsibility of Member States ‘*with only a limited co-ordinated overview at EU level of national efforts*’ (EC, 2015)
- A system of ‘*economic governance and social policy co-ordination*’

- A re-balancing of the EU's economic and social goals
 - Social 'Triple A'
 - A 'new start for social dialogue'
 - The European Pillar of Social Rights



- 'New Start for Social Dialogue'
 - *'a closer involvement of the social partners in the European Semester'* (European Commission)
- European Pillar of Social Rights
 - Embedded in the European Semester
- 2018 Country Reports
 - *'the country specific reports have never been so social'* (Commissioner Thyssen)



- Recovery? - *‘we are now in the fifth year of a recovery that really reaches every Member State’*
(Juncker, 2017)
- Variability - *‘persisting high levels of public debt in several Member States have not yet been resolved’*
- *‘Europeans need affordable, accessible and quality services’*
 - Specifically, child care, education, training, health, housing and long term care



Issue	Frequency
Pensions	16
Health care	12
Long term social care	3
Housing	4
General	9
Others	



Issue	Frequency
Technical and Vocational	14
Statutory/General education	7
Education for migrants/Roma children	4
Teacher workforce	2
Early Childhood Education and Care	4
Higher education	?

- 14 headline indicators
 - average improvement in 11, stable 2, decline 1.
- Seven categories ‘best performer’ -> ‘critical’
 - 17 Member States have at least one ‘critical’
 - 1/3 of assessments are in lowest 3 categories, ie ‘problems’
 - 6 Member States have no assessments in lowest 3 categories
 - 4 Member States have ‘problem’ assessments in 10 areas

- Re-balancing
 - Are CSRs ‘market-making’ or ‘market-correcting’?
(Copeland and Daly, 2018)
- Re-configuring
 - *‘empowering people and integrating them in the labour market . . . remains the best vehicle out of poverty and social exclusion’* (European Commission, 2017)

- What does the ‘social’ in ‘Social Europe’ mean?
 - market reinforcing or market mitigating?
- More than just ‘what?’, but ‘how?’
 - is social dialogue meaningful?
- Social Europe as ‘elite reform’? (Hyman, 2015)
 - do high level commitments make a real difference to the lives of EU citizens?