



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF
SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Press Release

Brussels, 22 November 2018

European Pillar of Social Rights holds the key to achieving Annual Growth Survey's priorities

On the 21st November the European Commission released its 2019 Annual Growth Survey (AGS), setting out its economic and social priorities for the next year. For the European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD), the AGS rightly points out to improvements in the European economy, whilst acknowledging that this is not benefitting all in society. EASPD calls on the European Commission to make greater use of the European Pillar of Social Rights in setting its economic and fiscal policies.

The European Semester is a European policy instrument aiming to better **coordinate national economic policies across Europe** through structured dialogue between the European Commission and Member States. As part of this process, **the European Commission yesterday published its Annual Growth Survey (AGS) 2019**, outlining what they see as the economic and social priorities in Europe for the year to come.

Six months before the next European elections (23-26 May 2019), the **AGS 2019 reflects on the impact the Juncker Commission has had on the European economy since the beginning of their mandate**, highlighting increasing employment and uninterrupted growth yet recognising that the economy is not benefitting all citizens and countries equally.

The AGS 2019 also prioritises **three elements as “key to a prosperous future”**: (1) delivering high-quality investment, (2) focusing on reforms that increase productivity growth, inclusiveness and institutional quality; and (3) continuing to ensure macro-financial stability and sound public finances.

The European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) recognises the importance of making the appropriate policy choices today to deliver higher and fairer growth, better jobs and a stronger capacity to smoothen the impacts of global economic cycles, as stated by the AGS 2019.

For Mr Luk Zelderloo, Secretary General of EASPD, **“the appropriate policy choice means delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights. The Pillar responds to the real needs of people**

across Europe”, adding that “for this reason, the Pillar should be the guiding compass for the implementation of the three elements; a perspective which is **a little weak in the AGS 2019**”.

President of EASPD, Mr Jim Crowe, welcomes the emphasis on quality investment arguing that “additional investment into making labour markets, education systems and care services more inclusive will be **better for beneficiaries, the economy and public finances**”; warning that “**the EU fiscal rules have meant the contrary: underinvestment into such support services**. Without additional incentives to invest in support services, the EU fiscal rules will continue to hinder the Commission’s three priorities and concrete action on the Pillar of Social Rights”.

Over the next year, **EASPD will continue to work with its members and partners to provide accurate information** on which measures can help care and support services for persons with disabilities across Europe implement the European Pillar of Social Rights and the AGS’ three priorities for the future.

Related Material

- [EASPD Report: European Semester and the European Pillar of Social Rights- Support services as key players in the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights \(2018\)](#)
- [EASPD Report: The European Semester and Social Investment: Addressing the funding gap in social services \(2017\)](#)
- [EASPD Report: “European Semester: Developing More Inclusive Labour Markets for All?” \(2016\)](#)
- [EASPD commissioned study: "The economic impact of inclusion in the open labour market for persons with disabilities" \(2016\)](#)
- [EASPD Report: How can the European Semester help to implement the UN CRPD \(2015\)](#)

Note to editors

The European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities is a non-profit European umbrella organization, established in 1996, and currently representing over 15,000 social and health services for persons with disabilities. EASPD advocates effective and high-quality disability-related services in the field of education, employment and individualised support, in line with the UN CRPD principles, which could bring benefits not only to persons with disabilities, but to society as a whole.

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