

Social Rights Monitor

European Trends

2021



solidar



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SOCIAL EUROPE

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Introduction

	EU-28 2018	EU-28 2019	EU-28 2020
GINI index¹	30.8	30.7	
Unemployment²	6.8%	6.3%	7.1 %
Gender Equality Index³	66.2 (2017)	67.4	67.9
In-work poverty⁴	9.4%	9.2%	
Housing Overcrowding⁵	15.5%	15.6%	

Selected indicators on the state of social rights in Europe

Missing data for 2020 are not available at the time of publication of the Social Rights Monitor 2021.

SOLIDAR is a European and worldwide network of more than 50 civil society organisations (CSOs), sharing the fundamental values of equality, solidarity, and participation. SOLIDAR promotes a just transition and social justice – in terms of an equal and fair distribution of wealth, knowledge, income, and power – through accessible and quality social services, social protection, lifelong learning, and fair working conditions.

SOLIDAR's Social Affairs Pillar, "Realising a Social Europe for All and with All", focuses on the social dimensions of the European Union. It analyses and monitors European labour markets and economic and fiscal governance, and it promotes increased access to sustainable, universal, and quality services for all, including marginalised groups, migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

To this end, SOLIDAR's Social Affairs Pillar set up the Social Rights Monitor, an annual publication investigating the impact of social and economic policies at European and national

level. The 2021 publication examines 13 EU countries – Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain, and the Netherlands – as well as the United Kingdom and two European Union candidate countries, Serbia and North Macedonia. In each of the 16 countries, a SOLIDAR member or partner set up a "National Strategy Group", which provided fundamental statistical data and findings thanks to the expertise of civil society organisations, academics, trade unionists, and national experts.

Each chapter is dedicated to one country, and the structure of the country monitors mirrors that of the European Pillar of Social Rights.⁶ There are three chapters: equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions, and social protection and inclusion. This enables SOLIDAR to more easily assess the implementation of the Social Pillar at the national level. Finally, the monitor assesses civic space, by evaluating freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly, as

1 Eurostat (2021). Gini coefficient of equivalised disposable income: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?lang=en&dataset=ilc_di12

2 Eurostat (2021). Unemployment by sex and age: annual data: https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=une_rt_a&lang=en

3 European Institute for Gender Equality (2021). Gender Equality Index: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2020/EU>

4 Eurostat (2021). In-work at-risk-of-poverty-rate: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tespm070/default/table?lang=en>

5 Eurostat (2021). Overcrowding rate by age, sex and poverty status – total population: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ilc_lvho05a/default/table?lang=en

6 European Commission (2017) The European Pillar of Social Rights: https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights_en

well as civil and social dialogue. This year, the chapters conclude with a section on the extent to which civil society has been involved in the preparation of the national Recovery and Resilience Plans financed by the European Recovery and Resilience Facility. This final analysis is carried out only in the chapters regarding members of the European Union.

Overall, the Social Rights Monitor 2021 identifies a general tendency to focus on certain impacts of Covid-19. It not only exacerbated existing inequalities across the countries, but also magnified the effects of public funds mismanagement, decreasing overall trust in politics and institutions and often generating social unrest and turmoil. The pandemic provided grounds for civil society and organised workers to push for new topics to be added to governments' agendas, as it violently forced public authorities to think about and deal with urgent issues that had not been prioritised before. For example, mental health and the digital divide became crucial topics for civil society and organisations, and governments across Europe and beyond had to address the public management of education and healthcare institutions. The pandemic provided a pretext for thinking outside the box and developing alternative methods of working, learning, commuting, and much more. Sometimes, more-inclusive methods were found that had not been deemed possible before. Almost every National Strategy group reports the introduction of teleworking as the most remarkable development in the world of work, potentially leading to a better work-life balance. This measure had a positive effect on some of the most vulnerable groups of workers, such as those with disabilities and single parents. However, remote and online activities had mostly negative implications, particularly among disadvantaged groups who encountered more obstacles than benefits. For example, some children could not exert their fundamental right to education, and where early childhood

care services were suspended, working from home became a huge challenge for parents. Moreover, digital illiteracy affects most elderly people, who often lacked support and could therefore not access some fundamental digital services. Therefore, these new developments need close monitoring and constant improvement if they are to foster fair and just societies for all.

The crisis hit hard, and it increased the income divide between the richest and the poorest people worldwide, generating huge waves of job losses across Europe and beyond. Unemployment rates reached worrying levels, with two million more unemployed workers in Europe at the beginning of 2021 compared to a year earlier. The unemployment rate increased (to 8.0%),⁷ as did the share of people who live in poverty and cannot afford decent housing, quality food, education, or basic healthcare. Job and wage protection schemes were strongly demanded by civil society and its organisations, but they were not implemented universally, frequently at the expense of workers in the most precarious situations. Young people, migrants, and the self-employed were often left behind. Generally, social cohesion and inclusion were not prioritised.

While societies in Europe and around the world are trying to recover from the crisis, SOLIDAR believes **there is great momentum for making social justice a priority through a just transition and for pushing progressive ideas into policymaking at both the European and national levels.** The European Pillar of Social Rights and its recently adopted Action Plan are key instruments to this end. In this period, SOLIDAR and the progressive movement can be catalysts for fundamental change towards a fairer and greener Europe. Our goal is to build back better: it is time to change our approach and to develop the European Union of high social standards and fair living and working conditions that people deserve.

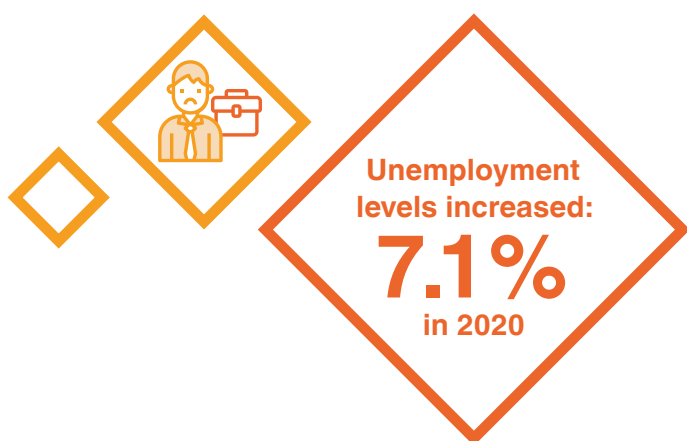
7 Eurostat (2021) Euroindicators – Unemployment: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/11563203/3-30072021-CP-EN.pdf/35dbf525-da32-809f-0f9d-cd36a271a760?t=1627633423854>

Equal opportunities and fair working conditions

EMPLOYMENT, PRECARIOUSNESS, AND WORKING CONDITIONS

The Social Rights Monitors published in 2019 and 2020 recorded slow but positive developments in social conditions, for example increased minimum wages in Spain, Czechia, and Hungary.⁸ However, some countries had not yet fully recovered from the acute financial crisis that started in 2008. Therefore, the 2020 and 2021 pandemic plunged Europe into the worst recession since World War II, which will probably lead to intense and durable consequences, some of them not yet measurable. It is important to remark that, during the most severe phases of the pandemic, many countries relied on actions set out by civil society organisations, which provided services and delivered basic support in almost every country analysed. Common actions in different countries include providing meals and shelters for poor or homeless people, translating Covid-19 rules into foreign languages, crowdfunding for digital tools such as personal computers, and much more.

However, **unemployment levels increased, affecting 7.1% of EU nationals in 2020⁹** – an increase of more than one percentage point from 2019. Countries outside the EU were affected too. Despite the growth in the employment rate in North Macedonia during the past years, it lost 6 percentage points in 2020 and 2021.¹⁰ The same goes for Serbia, where unemployment levels touched a historical low in the second quarter of 2020, before once again rising.¹¹ Member states have taken different actions to minimise the negative effects of the pandemic. The majority of measures aimed to prevent businesses from bankruptcy. The next most common measures protected incomes and employment levels. Among the analysed countries, Spain, Greece, and Hungary registered the highest rises in unemployment since the onset of the pandemic; while the Netherlands, Germany, and Italy recorded the smallest increases.¹² For Italy, this could be explained by the introduction in February 2020 of Europe's first temporary ban on layoffs, which saved thousands of jobs. However, the number of hours worked was drastically reduced in all the countries, causing reductions in many people's monthly income. Among the countries considered in this study, Italy registered the sharpest decrease in working hours (-9.7%), followed by Greece (-7.9%). Vulnerable categories, such as the young, the self-employed, and workers in precarious situations, saw their working hours decreased the most.



8 Hollewijn, J. (2020) European trends. Social Rights Monitor 2020: https://www.solidar.org/system/downloads/attachments/000/001/186/original/European_Trends_FINAL.pdf?1607694969

9 Eurostat (2021). Unemployment by sex and age - annual data: https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=une_rt_a&lang=en

10 Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, (2021), Active Population: https://www.stat.gov.mk/PrikaziSooopstenie_en.aspx?rbrtxt=98

11 OPBC (2021) Labour Force Survey: <https://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G2021/PdfE/G20211239.pdf>

12 Eurofund (2021) Living, working, and COVID-19: https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef20059en.pdf



Precariousness and unstable working conditions still affect too many people in Europe, and the situation did not improve over the last year, **as the number of flexible, platform, and self-employed workers increased.** Deteriorating working conditions are a constant reality for the youngest people, who were the most likely to lose their jobs. Indeed, across Europe, young women aged 18 to 34 were the most vulnerable group of workers. The lowest rate of job losses was among men aged 35 to 50.¹³ Many National Strategy Groups that contributed to this publication further remark that young people entering the labour market were disadvantaged, as training opportunities have been drastically reduced due to remote working conditions.

It is worrying to notice that the results of this study suggest that gains achieved in social standards during the last decade could be lost. The employment levels of disadvantaged and groups in vulnerable situations (young people, people with disabilities, women, LGBTQI+, migrants) seem to be the most impacted. One reason is that physical distancing measures have had a substantial impact on sectors employing a high proportion of women, and women's employment fell more sharply than it did during the 2008 recession. In addition, the closure of schools and other care services greatly

increased childcare needs, with a likely disproportionate impact on working parents, notably women.

The pandemic led to an improvement in the status of some professions, notably in sectors that proved to be essential for the functioning of societies during the pandemic. Workers in these sectors included education and research personnel (teachers, assistants, professors, researchers, cultural facilitators, and educational institutions' staff) and healthcare personnel (nurses, social care workers, doctors, and non-medical staff). The most remarkable example was in Serbia, which hired all healthcare workers who volunteered during the state of emergency. In Germany, a pay rise for health and social care workers was successfully negotiated through a new collective agreement: trade unions obtained a 1.4% rise for all workers on 1 April 2021, with a further 1.8% increase from 2022.¹⁴ French unions also obtained a pay rise for health workers in June 2020, after demonstrations and strikes.¹⁵

EDUCATION

The education sector was highlighted like never before during the most critical phases of the pandemic. In order to reduce the spread of the coronavirus, most countries decided to temporarily close schools and education and training institutions, moving classes and courses online in March 2020.

Although online learning and digital platforms have proved essential to ensure the continuation of education, they have led to further inequalities and discrimination among teachers, students, and learners. In all analysed

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ EPSU (2021) Germany: Latest agreement to boost pay in health and care: <https://www.epsu.org/article/germany-latest-agreement-boost-pay-health-and-care>

¹⁵ BBC (2020) Coronavirus: France's health workers given pay rises worth €8bn: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-53398208>



countries, **more vulnerable students** – such as those sharing digital tools or internet access, those lacking an adequate learning environment, or those whose parents could not be of help because of language or digital barriers – **were often left behind**. More than 40% of Europeans lack digital literacy.¹⁶ Children and students with disabilities or with special educational needs lost their support teachers during schools' closures. Moreover, students from disadvantaged backgrounds were also more likely to suffer from stressful home environments, which have a huge negative impact on mental health and development. On average, 5.7% of young Europeans aged 18 to 24 are not in education, employment, or training (NEET), with the highest rates in Spain at 9.7% and Bulgaria at 8.7%.¹⁷

The National Strategy Groups highlight how national education systems were not prepared to deal with such a sudden change. Many school systems in Europe and beyond therefore increasingly resorted to online learning platforms provided by private companies. In Greece, the government recommended that its schools and education institutions adopt Webex, an online platform provided by a private American company. Private-sector solutions tend to undermine educational equality and

academic freedom, and they raise concerns over the companies' data protection policies and goals to maximise profits.¹⁸ SOLIDAR's National Strategy Groups therefore demand more open-source resources, as well as digital training for both teachers and learners, who have to be aware of their rights and the risks emerging from digital online educational tools. During the pandemic, some good practices were found in Serbia, where a charity foundation offered free primary school textbooks in PDF format.

GENDER EQUALITY

The fragile gains in gender equality achieved during the past years may be rolled back by the pandemic's impact on gender violence, gendered roles such as housework and care work, and women's working and employment conditions. Indeed, women's employment levels fell faster than those of men, and the closure of schools and early childhood care services reinforced gendered stereotypes and had a disproportionate effect on working mothers. On average, the continuous increase in women's employment over the past years has always been countered by extreme gender segregation in the labour market, and some sectors have lower wages and less social protection than others. In all the countries analysed, women are overrepresented among temporary and part-time workers, and those in precarious situations. During the pandemic, being a migrant, single mother, or young women significantly increased the likelihood of being at risk of poverty. **In all the countries, it is evident that care and housework responsibilities are unequally distributed.**

16 Frank, A. (2020) Citizenship and Lifelong Learning Monitor 2020: <https://www.solidar.org/en/publications/citizenship-and-lifelong-learning-monitor-2020>

17 Eurostat (2021) Distribution of early leavers from education and training 2020: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/images/7/7e/Distribution_of_early_leavers_from_education_and_training_aged_18-24_by_labour_status%2C_2020_%28%25_of_population_aged_18-24%29.png

18 For a more detailed analysis of the impact of the pandemic on the privatisation of education, see: SOLIDAR Foundation (2021) The Commodification of Education and the Prevalence of For-Profit Education Stakeholders: https://www.solidar.org/system/downloads/attachments/000/001/374/original/SOLIDAR_Foundation_Policy_Paper_on_the_Commodification_of_Education_October_2021.pdf?1633423601

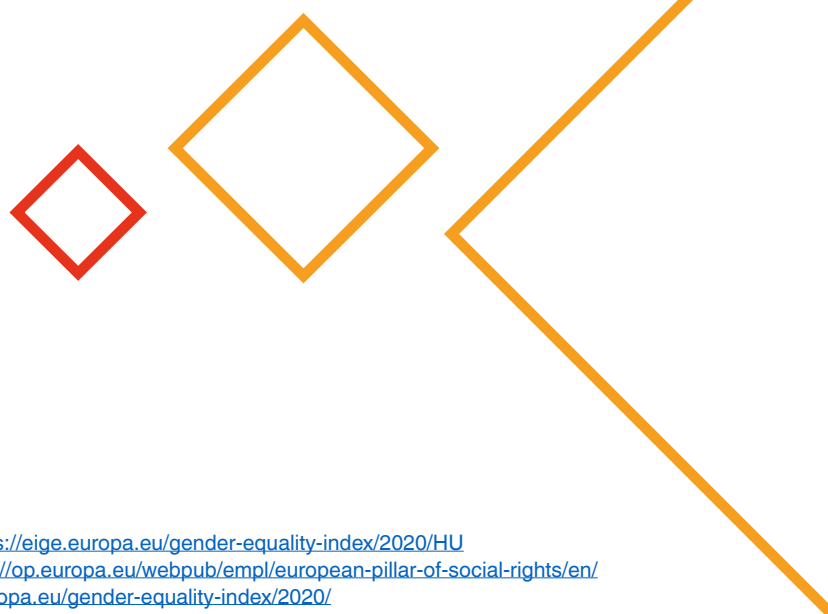
This often limited women’s participation in the labour market, politics, and social life – particularly during school closures. In Hungary, 95% of the country’s ministers and 100% of the board members of research-funding organisations are men.¹⁹ In France, 80% of the people responsible for daily housework activities are women.



The European Commission has committed to a more equal and just European society, particularly through the Presidency of Ursula von der Leyen, but much remains to be done in terms of gender equality. The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan has set an objective of reaching an employment rate of 78% by 2030, while halving the gender

employment gap compared to 2019.²⁰ However, the European Gender Equality Index indicates that, at the current pace, it will take more than 60 years to reach complete gender equality,²¹ demonstrating the urgent need to push for more-ambitious equality policies across Europe. Moreover, it is not encouraging to note that, although the Europe 2020 Strategy’s employment target has almost been reached – it is only 3 percentage points away²² – the gender gap remains high in all European countries.

In November 2020, the European Union adopted its first ever EU LGBTIQ Equality Strategy, for 2020-2025.²³ It pushed for the adoption of a non-discrimination directive and took some positive steps towards the achievement of equality, ensuring safety for LGBTIQ+ people, and building inclusive societies across European Union member states. The Netherlands recently took a small step forward, by removing all gender registrations (‘X’, ‘F’, ‘M’) from identity cards and documents from 2024. This will make it easier to promote equality and respect for all gender identities and characteristics, as well as the recognition of the LGBTIQ+ community.



19 EIGE (2021) Gender Equality Index 2020 – Hungary: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2020/HU>

20 European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan (2021): <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/empl/european-pillar-of-social-rights/en/>

21 EIGE (2021) Gender Equality Index 2020: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2020/>

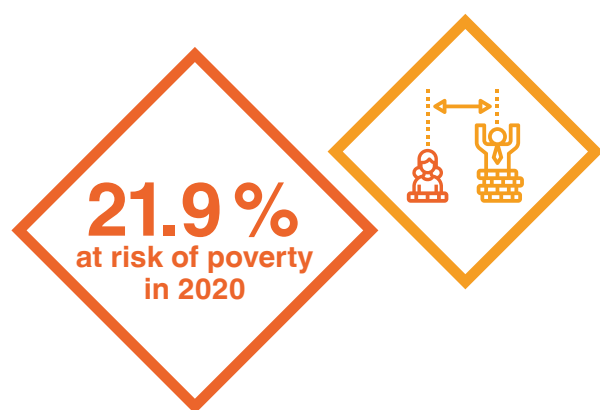
22 The Europe 2020 Strategy set the employment target for 2020 at 75% of the population, while the European employment rate was at 72% at the end of 2020. The Strategy is available online (p.3): <https://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf>

23 European Commission (2020) Union of Equality: LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/lgbtiq_strategy_2020-2025_en.pdf

Social protection and inclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic reminded us about many aspects of everyday life that often go unnoticed. It brought to the surface deep-rooted inequalities and reminded us how important it is to value and support spaces and services that are often taken for granted. These include education and training institutions, healthcare systems that provide for both physical and mental health, well-functioning welfare and social security systems to reduce poverty and social exclusion, and services that fight gender violence. Overall, the impact of the pandemic has been dramatic for most people, touching most aspects of daily socio-economic life across Europe and beyond. Many National Strategy Groups have demanded healthcare for all – including migrants and undocumented people – and the introduction of accessible mental health support.

INCREASED POVERTY, INCREASED WEALTH GAP



The wealth gap between rich and poor has widened dramatically in 2020 and 2021, and there was a worrying increase in

both the number of people living in poverty and the number of billionaires. While 21.9% of the EU population lived at risk of poverty in 2020 – with more than 33% in Bulgaria, more than 25% in Greece and Spain, and more than 30% in Estonia and Germany²⁴ – the combined wealth of European billionaires rose to almost €3 trillion.²⁵ That meant the richest people were shielded from the economic impact of the pandemic, and its burden was carried by middle- and low-income people. Germany has Europe's greatest share of enriched billionaires, while France saw a rise in sales of luxury and fashion goods during the year. At the same time, other people in Europe were asking for mortgage and rent subsidies, as well as immediate responses to the shortage of affordable housing and to overcrowded housing, which were highlighted as major problems in most of the countries analysed. Overcrowding, which prevents people from living in mentally and physically safe spaces, affected 39.5% of the population. In Bulgaria, 36.2% in Croatia, and 29.1% in Greece.²⁶ Even working Europeans could not afford a basic standard of living: more than 9% of employed people in Europe were at risk of poverty, with highs of 11.8% in Spain and Luxembourg, followed by 10.6% in Germany, and 10.5% in Estonia.²⁷

MIGRANTS, REFUGEES, AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

Across the countries analysed, the situation for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers (MRAs) deteriorated during 2020 and 2021. Already in a vulnerable position due to long bureaucratic procedures, language barriers, and discrimination at work and in society,

24 Eurostat (2020) People at risk of poverty 2020: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:People_at_risk_of_poverty_2020_WEB1_FINAL.png

25 Forbes (2021) 2021 List of the World Billionaires: <https://www.forbes.com/billionaires/>

26 Eurostat (2021). Overcrowding rate by age, sex, and poverty status – total population: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ilc_lvho05a/default/table?lang=en

27 Eurostat (2021). In-work at-risk-of-poverty-rate: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tespm070/default/table?lang=en>

MRAs are one of the groups most exposed to the consequences of economic downturns. The pandemic negatively influenced international travel, decreasing migration to various European countries. At the same time, the deep recession caused by the pandemic put additional pressure on existing conflicts around the world and often aggravated them. Migration therefore continued, possibly within countries or towards neighbouring countries.²⁸ In addition, some countries tried to discourage migration as much as possible. Greece, for example, approved at the beginning of 2020 the controversial measure of closing its external border and suspending the procedures for asylum applicants. The situation for MRAs residing in European countries, however, has not been easier: they suffered inequalities in treatment and were often not granted access to fundamental services. This was particularly evident in the vaccination processes set up across Europe, which often did not include undocumented migrants or people waiting for their documents to be approved. This was the case in France, Denmark, and the Netherlands. This situation, coupled with social distancing and the suspension of activities by many CSOs working on MRA reception, hindered migrants' inclusion and worsened social cohesion across Europe.

At a European level, the European Commission presented its Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion, a strategic plan for the period 2021 to 2027. It is built on the basis of the previous action plan (of 2016) and aims to address persisting challenges, particularly those that occur in the labour market, in education, and in access to public services. However, the plan's overarching concept is integration, understood

as a shared effort by both communities and newcomers, who should embody the so-called European way of life.²⁹

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Throughout 2020 and 2021, European healthcare systems have been at the centre of political and organisational debates like never before. They became a common topic in Europe and beyond, as solid, inclusive, well-functioning public healthcare systems were fundamental to efforts to contain the spread of the coronavirus. The pandemic highlighted many weak points, particularly in countries lacking hospital beds and medical and non-medical personnel. This was the case for Italy, Spain, and the UK, where the rate of deaths due to Covid-19 was the highest. Across almost all analysed countries, geographical inequalities persist: overall, it is more difficult to access quality or specific care in rural and disadvantaged areas.

Lastly, SOLIDAR's National Strategy Groups highlight the deterioration of mental health due to an unprecedented situation that is stressful and uncertain and that resulted in loss, grief, poverty, fear, and a lack of social contact. Therefore, CSOs have been calling for the urgent development of public and accessible psychological support systems. In most countries, mental health services are currently a luxury that only a minority of the population can afford. Moreover, as highlighted by research conducted in Italy, depressive symptoms increased exponentially among the young, who are often overrepresented among people at risk of poverty.

28 [1] International Centre for Migration Policy Development ICMPD (2020) ICMPD Migration Outlook 2021: https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/50542/file/ICMPD_Migration_Outlook_2021_final.pdf

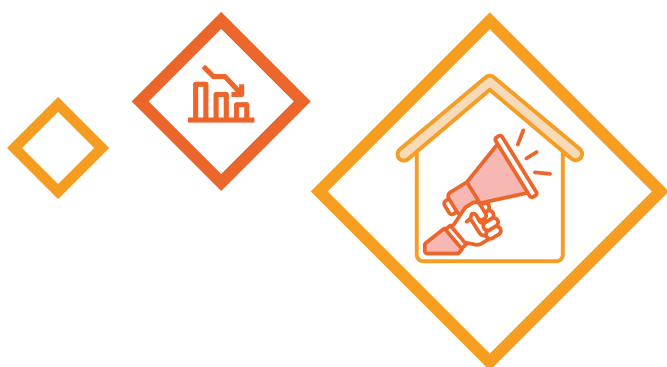
29 European Commission (2020) Press release – Inclusion for all: Commission presents action plan on integration and inclusion 2021-2027: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_2178

Civic space

According to the analysis carried out in this publication, **civic space has been shrinking due to unprecedented restrictions on civic space and basic freedoms adopted in 2020 and 2021.** The main concern shared by SOLIDAR's National Strategy Groups is that the restrictions imposed to limit the spread of the coronavirus could have a long-term negative impact on fundamental rights. While it is acknowledged that restrictions were often necessary to curb the pandemic, it is nevertheless worrying that some of them were not been drafted or implemented with transparency. Some do not incorporate the principles of necessity and of proportionality. Overall, protests and public demonstrations often witnessed the use of force and unlawful detention by police forces. This has been the case in Greece, Germany, France, Serbia, the UK, Hungary, and the Netherlands.³⁰ During

the year, the biggest demonstrations across Europe gathered people around the themes of the climate crisis, Covid-19 measures, and the “Black Lives Matter” (BLM) movement. The BLM movement followed the murder of George Floyd by a police officer in Minneapolis in May 2020 and had huge resonance in the US and beyond.

In addition, it can be concluded from the country monitors reported in this publication that some measures that limited civic spaces across Europe had asymmetric effects on different societal groups, often magnifying deeply rooted forms of discrimination. The enforcement of lockdown measures, such as restrictions on the freedom of movement, disproportionately affected the most vulnerable groups and led to further marginalisation, stigmatisation, and even violence. In Italy, Spain, and the UK, homeless people have been fined for not complying with rules on self-isolation.³¹ Police controls often disproportionately targeted certain ethnic groups. In the UK, for example, 7.2 out of every 1,000 Black people were stopped in March 2020, but 9.3 were stopped in April 2020, the first month of pandemic restrictions.³² Similar data were reported in France, where in the Department of Saint-Denis – a working-class neighbourhood with a high percentage of foreigners – the number of fines was double the national average.³³



30 This information, reported in the specific country monitors of this publication, is backed by the National Strategy Groups reports, as well as by Amnesty International (2020) analysis “Policing the Pandemic – Human rights violations in the enforcement of covid-19 measures in Europe” (accessible online at <https://www.amnesty.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Report-Policing-the-pandemic-FINAL-.pdf>)

31 Amnesty International (2020) “Policing the Pandemic – Human rights violations in the enforcement of covid-19 measures in Europe”: <https://www.amnesty.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Report-Policing-the-pandemic-FINAL-.pdf>

32 UK Metropolitan Police (2021) Disaggregated data September 2019 – September 2021: https://www.met.police.uk/sd/stats-and-data/met/stop-and-search-dashboard/?_cf_chl_captcha_tk__=pmd_ThVjFBuHOHGoqmqxX0bnryoYYG9Fs9PjQ4jPLs_vPw-1634643028-0-gqNtZGzNA1CjcnBszQh9

33 Le Parisien (2020) Coronavirus en Seine-Saint-Denis : un nombre record d’amendes: <https://www.leparisien.fr/seine-saint-denis-93/coronavirus-en-seine-saint-denis-un-nombre-record-d-amendes-police-et-justice-durcissent-le-ton-19-03-2020-8284008.php>

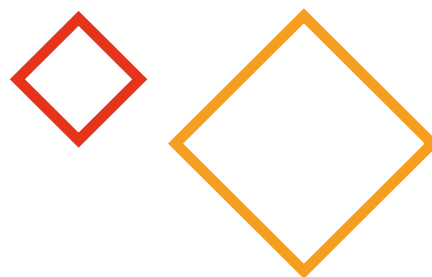


The European recovery and resilience facility

In May 2020, the European Commission announced a plan to borrow €750 billion to support socio-economic recovery in the EU and some other parts of Europe, the so-called NextGenerationEU. The centrepiece of the plan was the Recovery and Resilience Facility, which will finance reforms in much of Europe until the end of 2026. It asks each EU member state to draft a national Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) for adoption at European level. Each NRRP had to include a description of how the country intended to spend the European grants and loans in order to recover from the crisis and achieve higher socio-economic standards. The plans needed to follow the principle of gender equality and six identified policy areas, including the green and digital transitions, social and territorial cohesion, socio-economic resilience, and education.

SOLIDAR Social Rights Monitor 2021 investigates the extent to which CSOs have been included in the drafting procedure of these national Recovery and Resilience Plans. In almost every country, the National Strategy Group reported that the impact of the Covid-19 crisis violently impacted social and civil dialogue. A state of emergency was declared in many of the countries analysed, resulting in less-transparent and less-inclusive policy-making processes due to the exceptional

situation and the necessity of adopting new measures quickly. This was not received positively by organised society and labour, particularly with regards to the preparation of the NRRPs. Indeed, Article 18(4) (q) of the Recovery and Resilience Facility Regulation requires governments to carry out open consultations with social partners, CSOs, and other relevant stakeholders, and to reflect their input in the plans. **This was not the case – at least not in a meaningful and structured way – in any of the countries analysed.** Overall, the results of this year's Social Rights Monitor with respect to the role of CSOs in the development of NRRPs are in line with the outcome of a recent survey carried out by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). This said that the consultation processes “are far from satisfactory in relation to the justified demands of civil society and even in relation to the terms set out in the RRF Regulation”. SOLIDAR regrets having to make such an assessment, especially in light of the crucial role played by civil society during the emergency and its untapped potential to promote innovative and socially just measures to help recover from the crisis. We call on national authorities to strengthen civil and social dialogue during the implementation phase of the NRRPs and urge EU authorities to closely monitor this process.





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SOLIDAR is a European and worldwide network of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working to advance social justice through a just transition in Europe and worldwide. With over 50 member organisations based in 26 countries (19 of which are EU countries), member organisations are national CSOs in Europe, as well as some non-EU and EU-wide organisations, working in one or more of our fields of activity.

SOLIDAR

Avenue des Arts, 50
1000 Brussels - Belgium
+32 2 500 10 20
www.solidar.org
[@SOLIDAR_EU](https://twitter.com/SOLIDAR_EU)

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Avenue des Arts, 46
1000 Bruxelles - Belgium
+32 2 234 69 00
info@feps-europe.eu
www.feps-europe.eu
[@FEPS_Europe](https://twitter.com/FEPS_Europe)



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RESPONSIBLE EDITOR:

Mikael Leyi

AUTHOR:

Beatrice di Padua

COORDINATION OF PUBLICATION:

Carlos Roldán Mejías, Giorgia Gusciglio, Martina Corti

COPY EDITING:

Sebastian Moffett

GRAPHIC DESIGN:

Maximilian Fischer

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM:

Institute for Social Integration (Bulgaria), Centre for Peace Studies (Croatia), Forum for International Cooperation (Denmark), MKC Praha (Czechia), Johannes Mihkelson Centre (Estonia), ONG OGBL Solidarité Syndicale (Luxembourg), CEMÉA (France), Ligue de l'Enseignement (France), Association for the Social Support of Youth (Greece), PGA-Hungary (Hungary), Associazione Ricreativa e Culturale Italiana (Italy), Community Development Institute (North Macedonia), Initiative for Development and Cooperation (Serbia), Eudamonia (the Netherlands), VolontEurope (the UK and Germany), Movimiento por la Paz (Spain)



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