

BRAIN-IPSWICH

FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE, BELSPO, 15/05/2015

ATTENDING

- Christine Mathieu, BELSPO
- Guy Van Gyes, KU Leuven – HIVA
- Sem Vandekerckhove, KU Leuven – HIVA
- Diego Collado, UA-CSB
- Henk Van Hootegem, Steunpunt Armoedebestrijding
- Alain Piette, SPF ETCS
- Bastien Castiaux, CRB-CCE
- Annelies Decat, UNIA
- Ive Marx, UA-CSB
- François Rycx, ULB
- Stephan Kampelmann, ULB
- Anne-Catherine Guio, LISER
- Fabrizio Leiva-Ovalle, POD MI
- François Ghesquière, IWEPS
- Frederic Poupinel De Valence, SPF ETCS
- Hannah Vermaut, UNIA
- Renaat Hanssens, ACV
- Sarah Scheepers, ELLA vzw
- Sile O'Dorchai, IWEPS
- Torsten Müller, ETUI
- Wiemer Salverda, AIAS

Members not present (pre-arranged):

- Emmanuelle Bourgeois, BELSPO
- Maarten Goos, KU Leuven
- Bea Cantillon, UA-CSB

AGENDA

TOUR DE TABLE

- Presentation of the attending members of the follow-up committee.
- The policy notes can be circulated within the organizations of the members of the follow-up committee for additional feedback.
- The policy notes will be communicated by Belspo to their audience around the second week of June.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

- By Sem Vandekerckhove, KU Leuven – HIVA.
- Overview of the structure and the output of the project, (see slideshow).

PRESENTATIONS

- Slideshows and papers can be found on the website: www.workingpoor.be.
- Financial work incentives and the long-term unemployed / The effect of tax-benefit policy changes on the trilemma of welfare reform (UA – CSB), by Diego Collado (see slideshow).
- Minimum wages and the working poor / Poverty consequences of job polarization (KU Leuven – HIVA), by Sem Vandekerckhove, KU Leuven – HIVA (see slideshow).
- Diversity and discrimination (ULB), by Sem Vandekerckhove, stand-in (see slideshow).

QUESTIONS AND REMARKS

- Poverty and in-work poverty evolutions are best drawn in one graph to show the natural link between both.
- Is Belgium fair to migrant workers? A 20% increase in diversity leads to a 1% decrease in wages, 90% of diversity differences are due to observable individual factors, e.g. horizontal and vertical segregation and human capital, and collective bargaining is shown to increase fairness. Labour market participation of migrants, however, remains a weak point.
- Is Belgium fair to female workers? The residual gender pay gap is larger than the ethnic pay gap, but in comparison with other countries, the gender pay gap in Belgium is low and decreasing by cohort (young cohort: around zero). The EU now stresses the gender employment gap, which in Belgium is large but decreasing since 2008 due to increasing full-time employment among women and decreasing full-time employment among men.
- Common levers (employment creation, lower nor higher wages) are found to be inefficient to tackle poverty, because the workers that benefit first do not come from poor households. Targeted policies at

well-defined groups (i.e. workers with a history of illness) are preferred over radical changes to the institutional structure.

- Few policies in Belgium directly lead to in-work poverty: service vouchers are a contained and subsidized form of low-paid work that is different from more precarious forms such as mini-jobs or zero-hour contracts that exist in Germany or the UK. Flexi-jobs are complementing full-time and larger part-time jobs. For long-term agency work, permanent contracts are in the making. The work bonus is topped at a low-wage threshold, increasing net wages for the low-paid. It is recommended to keep with standard contract forms in light of trends such as the growth of the platform economy.

PLANNING

Final conference in September.

- We were unable to find a suiting date for the final conference before Summer. After consulting the partners and stakeholders, and addressing the timing at the follow-up committee, it was decided to organize the conference end of September, and to fix the date as soon as possible.
- Doodle for the date: <https://doodle.com/poll/9wusmf2rirqnxw8>.
- In order for the conference to fall within the project period, an extension should be demanded.
- Belspo has a conference room available for 100 people.
- Belspo has promotion material available, this should be requested as soon as possible.
- UNIA/Steunpunt Armoedebestrijding have translation headsets available.
- An interpreter and a booth are still required.

Contents of the conference (comments by the institutional partners, to be confirmed).

- Presentation of the research.
 - Work incentives and non-standard work (CSB, comments: Steunpunt Armoedebestrijding).
 - Collective bargaining (KUL, comments: CRB).
 - Discrimination (ULB, comments: UNIA).
- Two keynote speeches by external experts.
- Panel debate with study departments of political parties (two Dutch, two French speaking).