

SOCIAL EUROPE CONFERENCE 2024

Civil society in the European Semester - road to a more democratic and social cycle

Date: 3 December 2024, from 9.30 to 12.00

Location: European Parliament, Brussels; Room ASP 3H1

Concept Note:

The 2024 Social Europe Conference, SOLIDAR's annual flagship event focused on social rights, will explore the crucial role of civil society organizations (CSOs) within the European Semester. The conference will also present the findings of the Social Rights Monitor (SRM), SOLIDAR's yearly publication assessing the state of social rights, civic space and the progress towards a just transition from the perspective of civil society. Both the SRM and the Social Europe Conference are funded under the EaSI strand of the ESF+, in the framework of the programme "Realising a Social Europe for All 2024".

The conference will be centered around the potential role of CSOs in strengthening the social and democratic aspects of the European Semester. Building upon the SRM findings, which emerged from the analysis of national CSOs, the event will explore the untapped expertise of CSOs in the Semester, gather knowledge from CSOs at EU and national level on their experience with the cycle, and discuss strategies for ensuring CSOs are meaningfully integrated into the Semester process.

- **Strengthened CSO Involvement:** speakers will reason on the need for greater CSO participation in the European Semester to ensure that social justice perspectives are adequately considered.
- **Leveraging CSO Expertise:** CSOs possess valuable knowledge and experience that can significantly contribute to the Semester process, and they represent the most vulnerable in our societies. Their voice is essential to ensure that the Semester fosters social justice, but this is not adequately integrated into the cycle. The exchange will shed light on this shortcoming.
- **Challenges and opportunities:** in this event we will analyse CSOs engagement within the European Semester, identifying key barriers, potential solutions and strategies for overcoming these challenges and advocate for institutional changes.

Draft programme:

09:30 – 09:40	Welcome and introduction
09:40 – 10:00	Keynote speech MEP Aurore Lalucq, S&D
10:00 – 10:20	Presentation of the Social Rights Monitor results SOLIDAR
10:20 – 10:35	Q&A
10:35 – 11:40	Panel discussion - the role of Civil Society in the European Semester <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Barbara Kurkowiak, DG Employment, European Semester Unit (EMPL.F.1)• Laura de Bonfils, Social Platform• Oliver Röpke, EESC – <i>TBC</i>• Bart Vanhercke, ETUI - <i>TBC</i>
11:40 – 11:55	Q&A
11:55 – 12:00	Conclusions