

**WorkYP – Working Yet Poor**  
**Project financed under the Horizon2020 Scheme**  
**Grant Agreement no. 870619**  
**Coordinator: Luca RATTI – University of Luxembourg**  
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*Abstract: The project Working and Yet Poor (WorkYP) is focused on the increasing social trend of working people at risk or below the poverty line. The Consortium will devote its research to explore the reasons of such phenomenon and elaborate recommendations to the EU and MSs legislators, to enhance the goals proclaimed in the European Pillar of Social Rights. The WorkYP Project will analyse seven representative Countries (Sweden, Italy, The Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, and Poland), selected on the basis of their geographical area, as well as their different social systems and legal orders. In each such Country, the WorkYP Project has identified four clusters of particularly Vulnerable and Underrepresented Persons (VUP Groups), which disadvantaged conditions impede full enjoyment of EU citizenship. Attenuating divergent trends across Europe will effectively prevent the risk of social dumping and reduce economic shocks. Only tackling vertically the vulnerabilities of VUPs and attenuating inequalities across diverging regimes will grant EU citizens, mostly those who do not circulate, regaining confidence in public governance and substantiating their citizenry's status.*

Duration 36 months, starting 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020 (application filed 13/3/2019; decision received 16/7/2019).

WorkYP Consortium: 11 partners, of which 8 Universities (Multi-Disciplinary Units: MDUs) and 3 Social Rights Institutions (SRIs).

MDUs:

1. University of Luxembourg
2. University of Bologna
3. Goethe University of Frankfurt
4. KULeuven
5. Tilburg University
6. Erasmus University Rotterdam
7. University of Lund
8. University of Gdansk

SRIs:

9. OSE Observatoire Social Européenne (Brussels)
10. FGB Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini (Rome)
11. EAPN European Anti-Poverty Network (Brussels) (+ 4 Linked Third Parties)

Each local unit is composed by experts in labour law, social security, industrial relations, economics, sociology, social rights, and poverty in general. One of the main features of the project is that **such expertise is combined** in the understanding of in-work poverty and in the elaboration of policy proposals.

We have selected **seven representative Countries** (Sweden, Italy, The Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, and Poland), on the basis of their geographical area, as well as their different social systems and legal orders.

Luxembourg has nowadays one of the highest in-work at-risk-of poverty rates in the EU (13.5% in 2018), the second highest in EU. In the same period, Belgium had 5.2, Germany 9.1, Italy 12.2, The Netherlands 6.1, Poland 9.7, and Sweden 7.0.

We centred the WorkYP Project on the idea of VUP: in contrast to VIP (i.e., very important people), **we minted the VUP acronym**, which stands for Vulnerable and Under-represented Persons.

In each of the mentioned Country, we identified **four clusters of particularly VUPs**, which disadvantaged conditions impede full enjoyment of EU citizenship:

- a) low wage workers
- b) solo self-employed
- c) flexible work contracts (fixed-term, agency work, involuntary part-time)
- d) casual/zero-hours/gig-economy workers

The research intuition is that **only tackling vertically the vulnerabilities of those VUP groups** will grant citizens, mostly those who do not circulate, regaining confidence in public governance and substantiating their citizenry's status.

The impact of the WorkYP project is not limited to a deeper theoretical and practical understanding of those phenomena, but includes public debate initiation, policy recommendations both to the EU and the national legislators, and practical tools such as a "*GoodJob!*" certificate, to be granted to those employers who respect certain levels of working conditions.

The overall message is that income inequality affects economic stability and social cohesion. The rise of in-work poverty is one of the elements to take into account when addressing income inequality.

Being at-risk of in-work poverty means risking not enjoying a decent life: this undermines the very concept of citizenship.

The **EU Pillar of Social Rights** – proclaimed in November 2017 – addresses those issues by granting all workers "fair and adequate wages" as well as an "adequate protection for all kinds of employment".

The WorkYP project's innovative take is, on the one hand, to consider only four clusters – the most relevant in terms of in-work poverty – in a given labour market; and, on the other hand, to study all them using a true **multi-disciplinary perspective**, which includes lawyers, economists, sociologists, social partners, and other stakeholders, with a view to encompass the **multi-faceted nature of in-work poverty**.

The WorkYP starting assumption is that the adoption of such comprehensive approach will help elaborate suitable policy proposals that take into account the complexities of the in-work poverty phenomenon.