

# **Review of minimum income schemes in Spain from the perspective of their effectiveness**

*Program for Employment and Social Innovation of the EU (axis PROGRESS)*

*Call for proposals VP/2014/006: Support for social protection reforms*

**Key learning and potential lessons for the future**



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*The opinions expressed in the different investigations carried out within the framework of the project are those of the authors and do not reflect the official position of the European Commission.*

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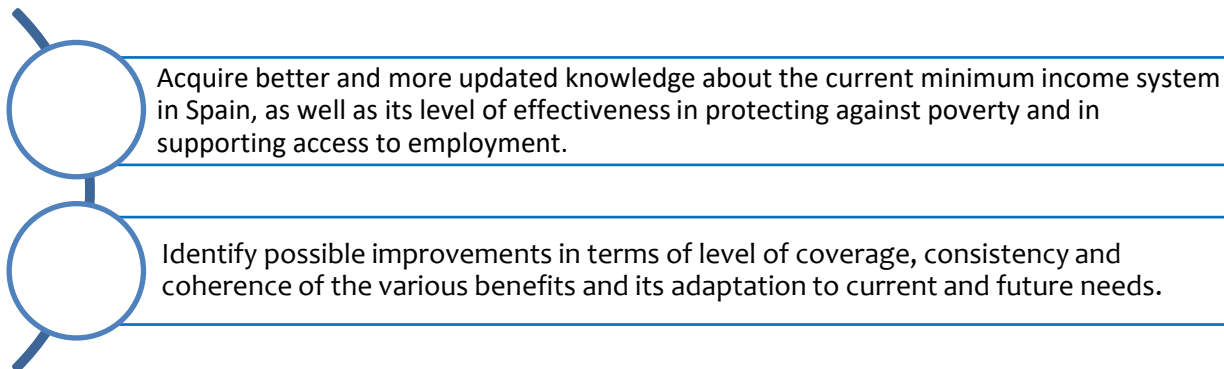
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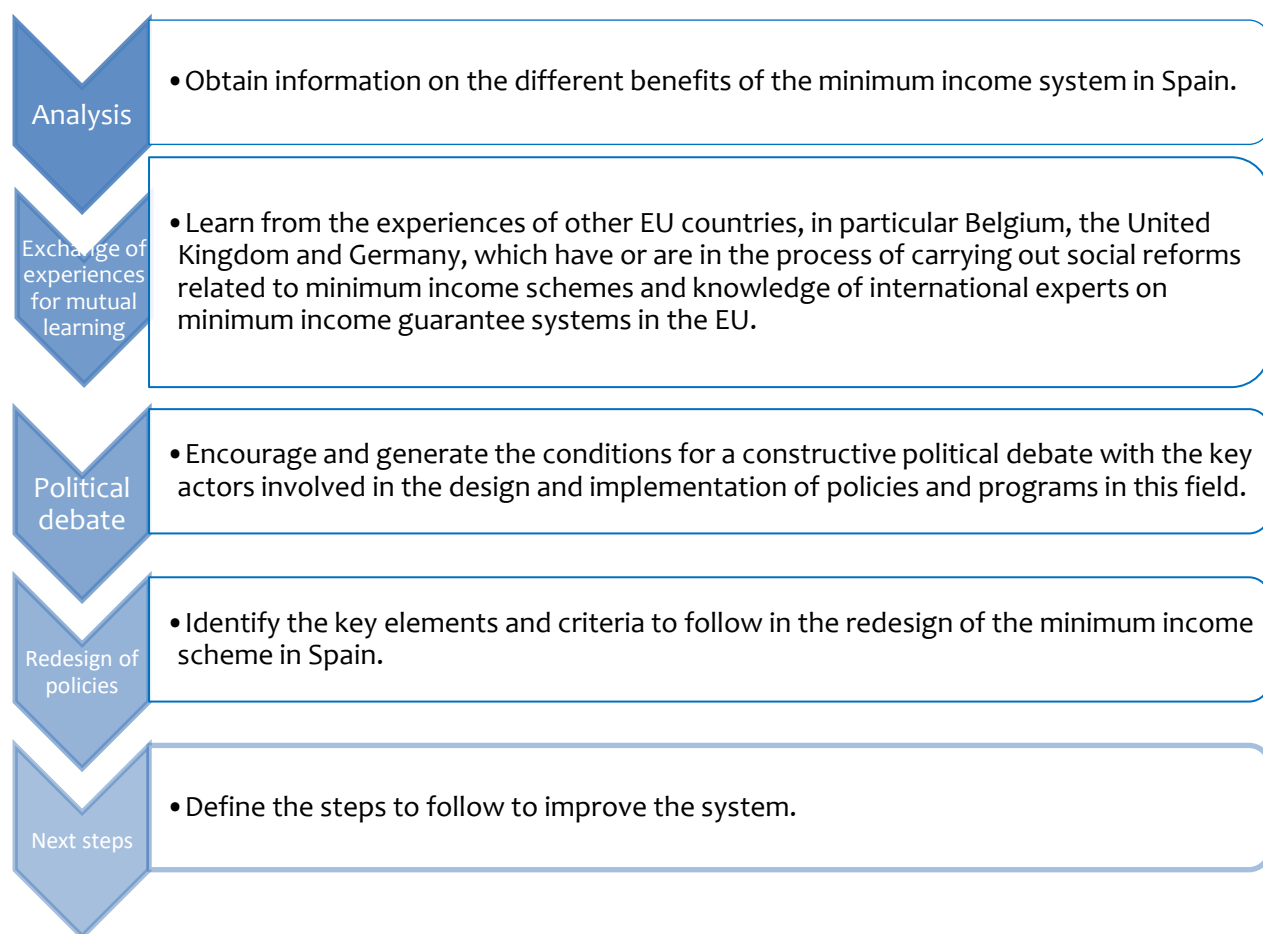


## 1. Review of the minimum income schemes in Spain from the perspective of cost-effectiveness

The Project "Review of the minimum income schemes in Spain from the perspective of cost-effectiveness" took place between June 2015 and December 2017. It is proposed with two general objectives:



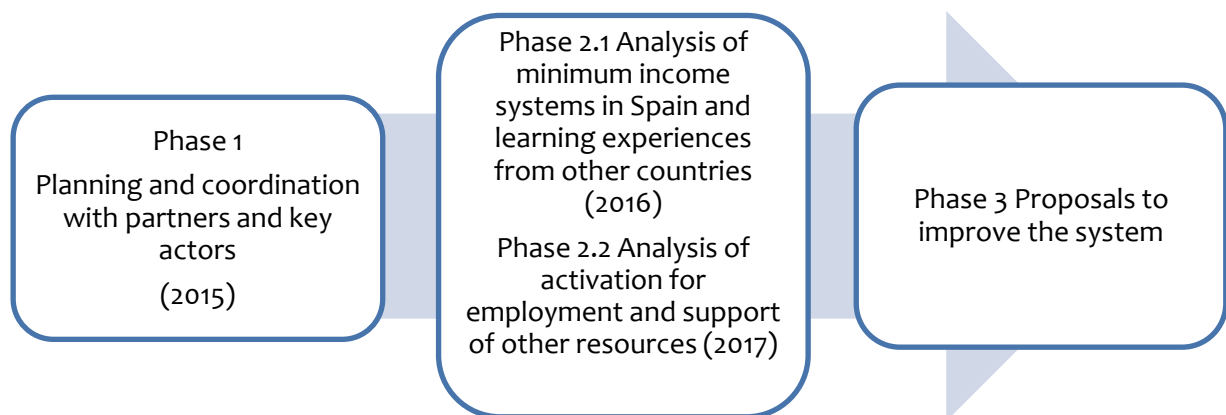
And it is structured on the basis of five dimensions with specific objectives:



The project is led by the General Directorate of Services for the Family and Children and has a broad participation of public and private actors, including all administrations that manage benefits and subsidies that make up the minimum income system:

|                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>DIRECTIVE COMMITTEE</b>     | National Institute of Social Security (INSS), Public State Employment Service (SEPE), Institute for the Elderly and Social Services (IMSERSO), Technical Secretariat of the Ministry of Employment and Social Security (Responsible for ESSPROS), four representatives of departments of the minimum income systems of the Autonomous Communities (Andalusia, Galicia, Community of Madrid and Valencian Community). |                                                                                                    |
| <b>PARTNERS AND KEY ACTORS</b> | <b>Spain</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Minimal income departments of the Autonomous Communities<br>Civil society (EAPN) and social agents |
|                                | <b>European Union</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Partner countries: Belgium, United Kingdom and Germany<br>EMIN                                     |
| <b>EXPERTS</b>                 | <b>Spain</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Scientific Committee: 5 experts<br>National experts                                                |
|                                | <b>European Union</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Experts from partner countries<br>European experts                                                 |

To achieve the objectives, three different phases are carried out:



## 2. The minimum income system in Spain

The minimum income guarantee system in Spain is defined as the set of non-contributory benefits that seek to ensure a basic level of economic sufficiency. From an operational point of view and within the framework of this project, it is considered that this system **is comprised of all monetary benefits of a non-contributory nature, subject to the verification of resources, which try to respond to the problems of insufficient income of families and people.** It is emphasized that no benefit has

been computed in kind, that in Spain they cover a wide range of needs, such as free health, free education, benefits for transportation, housing support, food aid, etc.

#### THE SYSTEM MAP

The economic benefits analysed, both within the scope of the General State Administration and the Autonomous Communities and Cities of Ceuta and Melilla, are as detailed below:

| SCOPE      | MANAGER                                | BENEFITS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| STATE      | PUBLIC STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (SEPE) | <p><i>Temporary unemployment subsidies intended to protect groups that have exhausted unemployment benefits or have not reached the minimum contributions needed to access this level of protection. They are also designed to deal with situations of long-term unemployment.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Subsidy for insufficient contributions</li> <li>- Subsidy for exhaustion of the contributory benefit</li> <li>- Subsidy for exhaustion of the contributory benefit for over 45 years</li> <li>- Disability review subsidy</li> <li>- Agrarian subsidy for residents in Extremadura and Andalusia</li> <li>- Subsidy for emigrants returned to Spain</li> <li>- Subsidy for persons released from incarceration</li> <li>- Active Insertion Income (RAI)</li> <li>- Subsidy for people over 55</li> <li>- Professional Retraining Program (Prepara)</li> <li>- Employment Activation Program (PAE).</li> </ul> |
|            | SOCIAL SECURITY MANAGEMENT ENTITIES    | <p><i>Destined to protect against the inability, permanent or transitory, to work</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Non-contributory maternity allowance</li> <li>- Non-contributory Social Security pensions for retirement and disability</li> <li>- Social Benefits for Persons with Disabilities and</li> <li>- Welfare pensions (old benefits of the National Social Assistance Fund (FONAS)).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|            | OTHERS                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supplementary benefits for contributory pensions (minimum supplements)</li> <li>- Supplementary benefits for non-contributory benefits</li> <li>- Benefit for children under care</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| AUTONOMOUS |                                        | <p><i>Aimed at reducing the insufficiency of income, although all of them establish a series of activation and insertion obligations linked to their perception</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minimum income of each of the Autonomous Communities and Cities of Ceuta and Melilla</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

In short, the **map of the minimum income system drawn reveals the complexity** of the system, both by the number of benefits and by the fact that in management, design, regulatory capacity and

financing participate different levels of public administration, in agreement with the competences that each level has attributed by the Spanish Constitution, which implies diversity in the amounts, access requirements, duration of the benefits, etc.

This configuration of the system is the result of the evolution of its development, based on the gradual coverage of certain needs. Thus, the last network has been formed as a large number of very different benefits, with some uniformity that derive from the General State Administration, and with greater diversity when it comes to social benefits of regional competence, for being part of the system of social services, and that meet the basic needs of people with serious economic and social difficulties (the so-called minimum insertion income of Autonomous Communities).

In terms of the time evolution both in terms of expenditure and in the number of benefits and beneficiaries, the rapid growth in the volume of the income guarantee system is observed. It is deduced that, although it has shown a remarkable ability to adjust to the change in the economic cycle, it has not been sufficient to respond to the rapid increase in situations of insufficient income in the crisis, mainly due to the sharp drop in employment.

The set of benefits that make up the minimum income system in Spain, object of this analysis, reaches an **annual expenditure of about twenty billion euro (about 7% corresponds to the minimum income of the Autonomous Communities)** and reaches almost **six million beneficiaries**. The annual expenditure of this system analyzed represents around **1.8% of GDP**.

It is important to note that, although the scope defined in the analysis is broad, it is not complete and, therefore, **does not include all the effort that is made to protect the population with insufficient income**. Although part of the benefits granted at the local level (due to not having all the complete information) and employment activation services applied to recipients of unemployment benefits have been analyzed, due to the lack of data availability of the whole of the territory and considering that local-level benefits are not defined as subjective rights, which have not provided information relevant to the study.

The benefits and services provided by the entities of the Third Sector of Social Action (although they have public subsidies) have not been taken into account.

## TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF THE BENEFICIARIES

### *With regard to unemployment benefits*

The percentages of beneficiaries of unemployment benefits and subsidies, in each Autonomous Community and the Cities of Ceuta and Melilla (A.C.) with respect to the total number of beneficiaries throughout national territory, are diverse, as well as among the different types of subsidy. This may be due to very different factors, especially the productive structure and the dynamics of the labour market.

There are also differences between the proportion of people receiving benefits in relation to the total of people receiving benefits in the different Autonomous Communities.

The examination by socio-demographic characteristics shows some specialization of unemployment

benefits according to certain characteristics of the recipients. **Men** are more present in certain types of **benefits entitled to longer potential durations** (the subsidies of special groups and for those who have exhausted the contributory benefits and are over 45 years). On the other hand, **women** have more weight in benefits with **shorter** rights (subsidies for exhaustion of contributory benefits of people less than 45 years and for insufficient contributions, in the agrarian income and, especially, in the temporary programs). In the case of age, it is more evident what has to do with the different position in the labour market of workers according to age. In this way, the subsidies with more presence (59%) among **young people** under 30 are those for **insufficient contributions**.

#### *Regarding pensions with minimum complement*

**Territorial diversity** is again the characteristic feature. The average of pensions with a complement to the minimum with regard to the total in all the Autonomous Communities stands at 26.5%: some communities have a higher percentage than the average (Extremadura 49.6%, Castilla-La Mancha 41.8%, Andalusia 55.5%, Canary Islands 33.3%, Galicia 33%, Murcia 32.2% and Melilla 32% ) and others have a smaller rates (Basque Country 12.8%, Madrid 17.3%, Catalonia 17.4% and Asturias 17.7%).

#### *With regard to minimum income*

**The Basque Country, Andalusia, Madrid and Catalonia account for 59% of the total number of minimum income beneficiary units**, while together they account for slightly more than half of the Spanish population. In terms of expenses, around **64% of the total corresponds to the budget executed** in these communities, with a very important weight of Navarre and the Basque Country in the total. This difference reveals that the resources devoted per beneficiary unit of the benefit are greater in these communities than in the rest.

The analysis according to socio-demographic characteristics reveals a certain predominance of some attributes: the majority of beneficiaries are **women** (60%), **Spaniards** (65%), have an age located in the central sections of **25 to 55 years** (77%), have **primary or lower education** (67%) and are **unemployed** (71%). The weights of foreigners (35%), over 55 (15%) and inactive non-retired people (23%) stand out.

#### **EFFECTS OF THE INCOME GUARANTEE SYSTEM ON POVERTY REDUCTION**

The Spanish income guarantee system presents a challenge in terms of its suitability to reduce the risk of poverty. There is a **modest redistributive effect** in households with insufficient income. With regard to poverty reduction, the data show that monetary benefits have a **greater impact on women** than on men, a significantly lower effect on young people and children, the opposite being true for **older people**, a clearly decreasing effect as the number of minors increases in the home, with a much **lower** contribution to poverty reduction in the case of **employed and unemployed persons** and a very different impact by regions.

This limited **effectiveness** should not be interpreted as the result of problems of allocation or lack of concentration in households with lower incomes. Far from it, the estimated indicators for the different income guarantee benefits show that **progressive levels are high**, with the highest levels corresponding to unemployment subsidy and minimum income.

This issue is more associated with some **amounts of income guarantee benefits below the poverty threshold, although it is known that the poverty threshold itself is relative regarding income.**

In this line of thought, we must highlight the greater difficulty of the system to cover **minors and young people**. For this group and for households with children, in general, the main instrument to avoid poverty are unemployment benefits and, to a lesser extent, minimum income. The rates of child poverty in Spain are closely related to the insufficiency of protection mechanisms for low-wage workers, less training, higher probability of unemployment and family burdens.

## DYNAMICS OF INCOME GUARANTEE BENEFITS

### *The dynamics of the level of unemployment benefits*

The aggregate analysis of the duration and reincorporation to the unemployment protection system based on the information about the people who started episodes of receipt of unemployment benefits in the period 2007-2014, suggests that most of the people who receive such subsidies tend to spend a relatively short period of time under their coverage when a sufficiently long-time period is considered. The average would be 25% -30% of the time for periods of seven to eight years, and considering only people with re-entry into the system, which are not all that enter at a given time. In fact, there is a **majority portion that consumes very short periods**, although it **re-enters several times**, as well as another important part with fewer re-entries and with somewhat longer periods of benefits. However, the proportion of those who remain separated from the labour market for long periods tends to be relatively low (around 10%, although it varies with the economic cycle).

### *The dynamics of regional minimum income*

With regard to regional minimum income, the two main features of the input analysis are:

- The validity in time of a **traditional pattern of beneficiaries**, whose most general characteristics are a low educational level, as well as a high presence of **single-person** and **single-parent households**.
- Along with this traditional pattern, we can also observe the greater presence of **immigrant population**, with characteristics and needs of protection different from those traditionally covered by the minimum income, and the increasing entry of **households without social problems, with more children** and with situations of more stable home, as a **consequence** of the severity and prolongation of the economic **crisis**.

Regarding the **average duration**, it is not very extensive: more than half of those that, in the eleven years under study, entered the programs were there less than a year and the average duration was of less than two years. For most households, the minimum income was, therefore, a temporary aid.

Although there is a not inconsiderable number of long-term entries (over five years), a certain extension in time of those currently in the programs (more than a quarter remained for more than four years) and a high rate of reincorporations (40% of those who left came back). It has also been found that there is a certain dependency problem depending on the time spent in the programs: **the probability of leaving the program decreases the longer the benefits last.**

## ACTIVATION AND LABOUR INSERTION

### *On unemployment benefits*

With regard to **the participation of persons receiving unemployment benefits in the actions carried out by public employment services (PES)**, it should be noted that **the incidence of the services provided is relatively important**. 75% -85% of people who receive subsidies participated in some type of action carried out by public employment services when a period of just over a decade is considered.

The **average number of services received** by the recipients is also relevant, standing at around **four on average**. The majority receives the **professional guidance service** (76% in the case of entrants in 2007 and 88% in the case of entrants in 2010).

Regarding **the relationship between the participation in the services offered by PES and the exit of people receiving subsidies to employment**, the results are the following:

- The exit rates due to new employment are higher among groups of people who received services but at times other than when the subsidy was received (i.e., prior to receipt).
- There are services that seem to be more **effective** than others: **employment promotion services** (hiring unemployed people in public works and services, among others) are those with the best results, followed by **services to promote employment** (aid to recruitment) and training and qualification services and advice for self-employment, and finally vocational guidance services.
- In general, the **exit rates** due to new employment of the **recipients** who do not **receive services** is **higher** than those of those who do receive them during the duration of the subsidy.

The results found are not conclusive, since there may be other reasons, such as the characteristics (observed and unobserved) of people, which would be correlated with both the higher probability of receiving services during the reception and the lower probability of finding employment. In fact, the review of the empirical literature on microeconomic evaluation of active labour market policies in Spain shows that the results of most of the studies are positive, with estimated impacts that imply a positive differential of the employment rate of the participants with respect to that of non-participants (or an increase in the probability of being hired) in the case, for example, of training actions. In any case, although on **average active policies serve to improve employment prospects**, that average hides very diverse situations that include the possibility of not improving at all.

### On the minimum income

The collection of a minimum income benefit entails a set of social and labour insertion measures. It is not easy to assess the impact of this type of measures; however, the analysis made by virtue of the cause of the decline in the system shows as a result more prominent than the majority of the casualties are the departures of an administrative nature (about 60% of the total). On the other hand, there are great **difficulties for participating households to leave the programs for reasons of personal autonomy**, fuelled even more, as revealed by the jump of more than 20 points that occurred between 2005 and 2008 in the increase of departures for administrative reasons (from 41.5% to 66.3%), to the detriment of the successful exit to obtain a job, which was reduced by almost 10 points (from 22.5% to 12.7%), as a consequence of the deterioration of the labour market.

In any case, **participation in employment insertion programs seems to have a positive effect on the exit rate**. There is a difference of almost seven points in terms of successful outcomes among those who participated in an employment-oriented activity and those who did so only in actions that sought to improve general social skills.

Four Autonomous Communities have been identified **for protected employment programs for people receiving minimum income** (Navarra's Social Protected Employment, the Employment and Training for Youth at Risk program in Castilla León, the Work and Training program in Catalonia and the aid for Insertion Programs of Murcia). There are substantial differences between them that define their own integrating and protective capacity both in the budget, the type of contracts offered and the duration, and in the access to the resource.

Secondly, the **social accompaniment programs for the development of inclusion itineraries** also stand out. These resources, although they do not offer a work contract, incorporate accompanying, training and/or labour intermediation actions that can be key for the labour incorporation of people who receive minimum income. The review of these programs has revealed that all of them recognize the need to combine socio-labour training with the active search for employment and complementary measures in certain profiles.

### CONSISTENCY

There is a certain lack of operational coordination of the different services, lack of mechanisms that allow it and absence of common criteria in the design and coverage.

Some weaknesses of the system are also observed, since certain groups cannot access benefits for regulatory reasons. Along with this, the differences in the level of economic protection of each of the benefits and in the accessibility to the system stand out, as well as the discretionary factor in the control and obligations related to the award of some benefits.

## OTHER AID AND SUPPORT FROM THE MUNICIPAL SOCIAL SERVICES SYSTEM

The project has also tried to identify and measure the material (benefits) and technical support (social support programs) received by households in a situation of lack of means to cover their basic needs and that make use of municipal social services. The social service benefits would include:

| Benefits of municipal social services |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| a) single payment aid                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ emergency aid or urgent need</li><li>▶ individual public financial aid</li><li>▶ other single payment of public financial aid</li></ul> |
| b) aid that involve food              |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| c) aid in kind for situations of need |                                                                                                                                                                                 |

To address this research, the information registered in the User Information System of Social Services (SIUSS) was analysed.<sup>1</sup>

With the limitations of the information available, the conclusion is that the non-periodic (or "one-off payment") subsidies range from 35 to 73 percent of households, according to the needs assessment. This data reflects the continuity of the tradition of using "extraordinary" aid in the face of situations of economic poverty that, according to the data, are for the most part not occasional. The estimated amounts are around 250 euro per aid. Among the households that have not received a minimum income or any non-periodic aid, one part has access to pensions and another to aid in kind (mainly food).

Overall, the image that emerges from the data is that of a relatively extensive coverage of households registered by social services. Between 17 and 18 percent would not access any material resources. Regarding access to support services, it can be noted that the vast majority of households with lack of resources do not seem to need them.

### 3. Contextualization and debates about the reality of other countries

#### MINIMUM INCOME SCHEMES IN EUROPE

With regard to minimum income systems, it should be noted that there is no single trend but that they are several and depend on the traditions and trajectories of the countries, as well as on their

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<sup>1</sup> The SIUSS is a registration system for users of local social services that is used by 15 territories (13 autonomous communities and the two autonomous cities). However, the use of SIUSS has a weakness in the analysis that may lead to underestimating the support to households with lack of income, the limited coverage of the database in terms of population and the under-registration of benefits.

welfare models. Although the idea of "social investment" of the minimum income systems as a paradigm is opening up, for the moment these remain closely linked to employability.

However, learning can be obtained from the different experiences regarding the following topics:

#### EFFECTIVENESS

- ▶ In general terms, **simplicity** and **integrality** are associated with better results.
- ▶ Integration with other policies such as housing, support for children, tax policies, especially for families, makes it possible to gain cost-efficiency.
- ▶ Effectiveness **does not depend only on the resources** that are invested but on the way in which policies are conceived and implemented.
- ▶ SIMs **reduce**, with relative effectiveness, the situations of **severe poverty**, but only do so on relative poverty with great limitation.
- ▶ The need to enact **complementary measures** to make the system more efficient and effective is evident.
- ▶

#### COVERAGE

- ▶ Countries that have developed **broad coverage** systems together with adequate social protection have **"resisted" the crisis better** than those with fragmented models of low protective intensity.
- ▶ In general, there is a high rate of eligible people who do not take up the help due to lack of information, fear of stigma or inability of administrative services to reach them.

#### CONDITIONS

- ▶ In general, there is an **increase in conditionalities** and a tightening up of the requirements for accessing programs, including those that are universal coverage.

## PRIORITIES

- ▶ The SIMs have recently been developed giving practical **priority** to two types of groups: the **population without** economic **resources** with **probabilities of access** to the labour market and, increasingly, the **working-age population** with **difficulties** or problems in **accessing** the **labour** market.

## INCENTIVIZE LABOUR ACTIVATION

- ▶ The principle of **"making work pay"** through an adequate combination of economic and employment support acquires prominence, although it can not always be met due to the concrete nature of different groups or the real opportunity of access to the labour market.

### MINIMUM INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT IN EUROPE: TRENDS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The way in which **the relationship between minimum income and access to employment in Europe are considered, is due to different paradigms**, among which three are worth mentioning:

#### NEO-LIBERAL PARADIGM "MAKING WORK PAY"

- The idea of **making work pay** seems to be the focus.
- Studies show that a generous minimum income system does not detract from the acceptance of employment, but rather can be a springboard for reintegration.
- Conditioning the receipt of benefits on the exercise of an activity, does not necessarily drive the transition of beneficiaries of social assistance to employment.

#### CONSERVATIVE PARADIGM "WORKFARE"

- The idea of **rights and obligations and, consequently, personal responsibilities** seem to take precedence.
- Empirical studies on the effectiveness of workfare produce very ambivalent conclusions, depending on the countries and programs being examined.
- The main risk is that sometimes they achieve labour insertion of people at the cost of worsening poverty (lower quality jobs).

#### FOCUS ON SOCIAL INVESTMENT

- This is based on a humanistic, multidimensional vision, over the long term, in which free choice prevails and in which it is understood that there is no opposition between income and employment.
- It combines three perspectives (social investment, fundamental rights and the focus on skills) and has to be developed into a quality, effective, flexible and multidimensional social assistance endeavour.
- This requires partnerships between employment services and social services, between local governments and the national government. From this perspective, proper benefits do not generate dependency, but allow beneficiaries to invest in themselves and their families.

The results and discussions of the project lead to some reflections and conclusions regarding these models. When it comes to strategies such as **"work comes first"**, although they may be attractive and have a lower cost in the short term, are not necessarily more cost-effective in the medium and long term. In fact, there is increasing evidence of the positive effects of high benefits in the transitions from social assistance to employment. Thus, for example, the Nordic countries with social protection and generous minimum income systems are also the first in the transition from social assistance to employment.

Regarding activation in employment, some conclusions are highlighted in terms of policy orientation as learning from other experiences, specifically:

- ▶ Despite the fact that obtaining a normal job continues to be the main objective of the vast majority of citizens in a situation of social exclusion, intermediate forms of "social activity", of **inclusive activation**, must be provided temporarily, for which a labour contract is out of reach or permanently in those profiles with **very limited employability**.
- ▶ The economic **incentives** to **hiring** have little effect if they are not well **targeted**, given that unemployment is mainly determined by demand limitations.
- ▶ The **measures to support employment** of recipients of minimum income have to be very focused and considered from the perspective of **integrated insertion itineraries**.

#### ARTICULATION OF MINIMUM INCOME SCHEMES IN THE SOCIAL PROTECTION NETWORK

As a general trend, it should be noted that the minimum income systems that **have been integrated into general social protection systems**, together with pensions or health care, have become a tool to combat poverty and support employment.

The minimum income systems **are structured differently in the three countries analysed in the project: United Kingdom, Germany and Belgium**. It must be borne in mind, in comparison with Spain, that these are countries with a more intense social protection network and low unemployment rates. In all of them, minimum income systems have grown in recent years; in some, in fact, the weight of social assistance grows to the detriment of social security.

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Germany</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This system places emphasis on income support and activation of the people who can work, that is, "the employable". At the same time, it provides social assistance and support to those who do not have the capacity to generate income.</li> <li>• It is based on the principles of guarantee of rights and fulfilment of responsibilities.</li> <li>• People seeking employment receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o "Passive benefits" (economic support, housing, health, long-term care, equipment, support for education, etc.)</li> <li>o "Activation benefits" that are formalized in a contract in which the State guarantees rights (individualized support in the search for employment, economic support, and other types of incentives)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The beneficiary commits to some obligations (including the search and acceptance of jobs)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Belgium</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Here the system is inspired by the principle of double rights for people who are of working age: the right to receive a guaranteed minimum income and the right to social integration.</li> <li>• The Minimum Subsistence Income has been replaced by Social Integration Income, which puts the accent on the involvement of people.</li> <li>• The supports materialize either in a job, or in an individual insertion project.</li> <li>• From the operational point of view, the compatibility and connection between the services provided by the different administrations is sought, as well as between the different administrative records</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>United Kingdom</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An ambitious reform is being carried out known as "Universal Credit", which tends towards simplification, while at the same time it is expected to result in savings for taxpayers.</li> <li>• A reorganization takes place so that six different subsidies that were administered by three different structures are integrated into a single organization.</li> <li>• The objective is to improve the incentives to work, reduce bureaucracy and increase the willingness of the beneficiaries to work. All this revolves around the attribution of responsibility to people, conditionality and support in access to employment. Experience shows that any reform has to be planned in the long term and have slow implementation.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                |

From the point of view of learning, the knowledge of these experiences allows to obtain some guidelines in terms of system management and recommend focusing on:

- Articulating a system of benefits accessible to citizens to make it easy for them to know their possible rights.
- Have a good information system and public dissemination, to minimize the number of people who meet access requirements but do not request it.

- Bring the process to the people in a defined and unique point: "One-stop shop".
- Act in accordance with the social support network. Intense support in areas such as housing, family and childhood help reduce the need for minimum income and vice versa; a reinforcement of the protection network (support for the family, housing, etc.) reduces the need for minimum income.
- Enabling measures and support for people that is flexible, continuous and adapted to different needs.

#### THE EFFECTS OF MINIMUM INCOME SYSTEMS ON ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT

The focus on activation is present, to a greater or lesser extent, in the three countries under study and is determinant in some of them, as in the case of Germany. The way to modulate this approach has to take into account the profile of the beneficiaries and also the reality of the labour market, which in the case of Spain differs a lot from the other three countries. In any case, the **target group of the activation is not all** the beneficiaries of the minimum income schemes, but only a part of them. We must not lose sight of the fact that the activation measures are costly and that, at times, they focus on the "more integratable" beneficiaries.

The **conditionalities** of benefits with respect to employment support are also present in all countries, although at different levels. In the United Kingdom, for example, these conditionalities are a disincentive for many people when applying for subsidies. This shows the risk of excessively sanctioning policies; in fact, in several of the countries analysed (Germany, Belgium) the sanctions only reach 2% or 3% of the beneficiaries.

A **more generous social assistance** is not necessarily at odds with the activation approach and, well posed, can facilitate access to employment; rather, it is necessary for access to employment, especially when poverty rates are high and employment levels are low.

The debate on minimum income schemes **cannot be separated from the debate on the labour market**. In future trends it is very important to take into account the evolution of the labour market, over which many uncertainties weigh. The trend seems to be towards greater deregulation and lower quality jobs, which raises the dilemma of the relationship between minimum wage and minimum income. Another trend for the future is the rotation between employment and unemployment; in fact, many jobs need to be complemented by minimum income and compatibility between employment and minimum income is recommended.

The data show that **the measures to support labour insertion bear fruit**, when they are developed under certain conditions: dedication of sufficient resources, continuity, diversity of options including protected employment, adaptation to the profile of the beneficiaries, complemented with intense support, for example family support, conciliation, etc. While it is true that there is always a small population group that takes the minimum income as a way of life, the data shows that most recipients of benefits want to work.