



The Social Convergence Framework in the European Semester

ETUC - Rethinking Sustainable Growth for Democracy, Security and Quality Jobs
8 September 2023

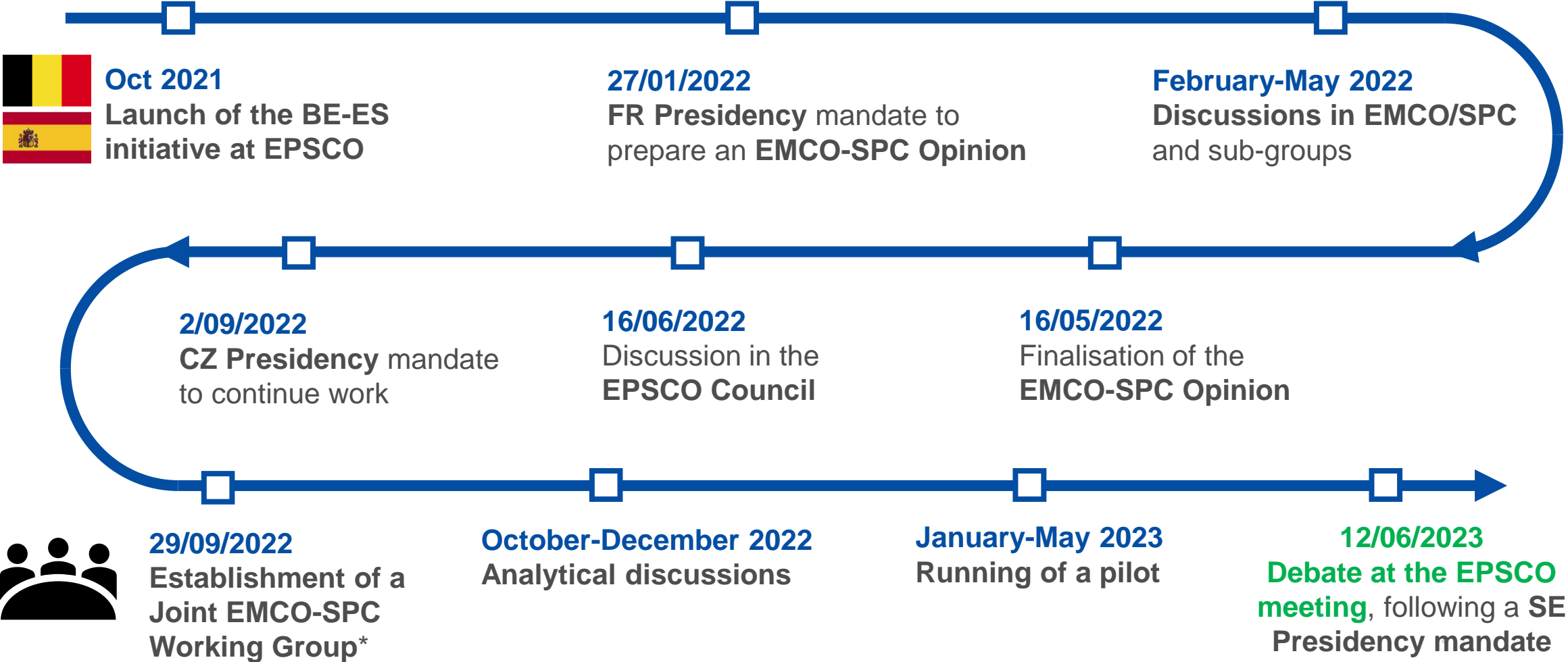
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1. Genesis and objectives

Genesis of the initiative



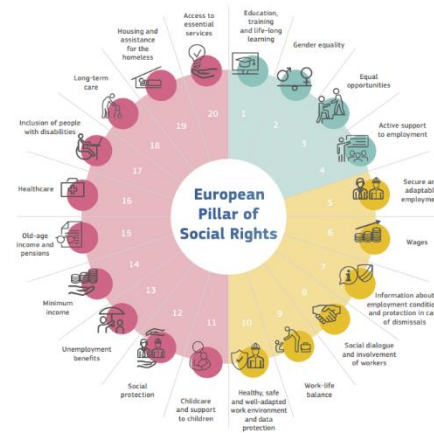
* The WG comprised the following members: BE, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LU, LT, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, SI, SK.

Stated objectives of the BE-ES initiative



Ensure

a strong social dimension of the European Semester



Support

the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights



Ensure

a strong role of the EPSCO Council

Value added of a SCF in the Semester



1. **Strengthen the monitoring and assessment of employment and social challenges** in the Member States (based on a two-stage process)



2. **Use existing monitoring tools** (i.e. Social Scoreboard, JER methodology) in a more systematic process and **explore possible methodological refinements**



3. **Sharpen the focus of the annual multilateral surveillance activities** conducted by the EPSCO Council and its Committees

2. Development of the Social Convergence Framework in the EMCO-SPC Working Group

Organisation of the work

“First phase”

October – December 2022



- **Conceptual and methodological issues**
- Focus on **criteria to identify Member States requiring a deeper examination, according to the findings of the Social Scoreboard**
- **First Commission services’ paper on the possible integration in the Semester**
- **Agreement on the organisation of the pilot in the second phase**

“Second phase”

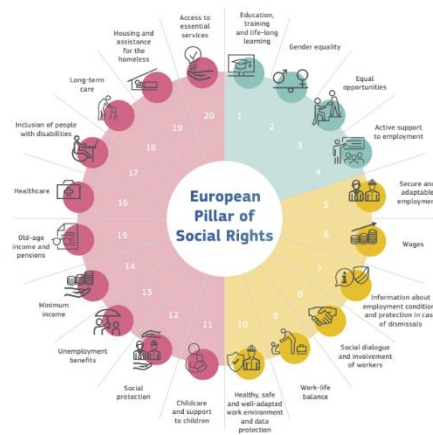
January – May 2023



(SE Presidency mandate in February 2023)

- (Cont.) **Conceptual and methodological issues**
- (Cont.) Focus on **criteria to identify Member States requiring a deeper examination, according to the findings of the Social Scoreboard**
- **Second Commission services’ paper on the possible integration in the Semester**
- Focus on **conducting a pilot by simulating all “steps”**
- **Preparation and finalisation of a final WG Report:**
 - ✓ with **Key Messages endorsed by EMCO and SPC**

Key features of the framework



Title

“Social Convergence Framework”

Objective

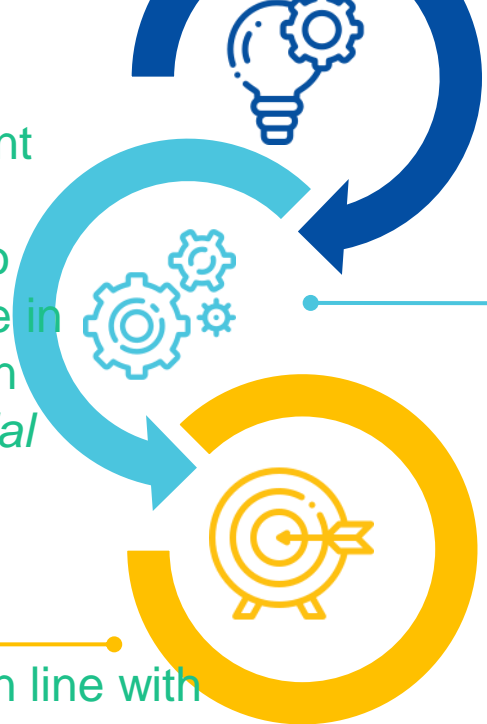
- Monitoring **“upward social convergence”** in the Union, in line with the **European Pillar of Social Rights** and the **Social Scoreboard**

Value added

- **More structured analysis** of risks and challenges

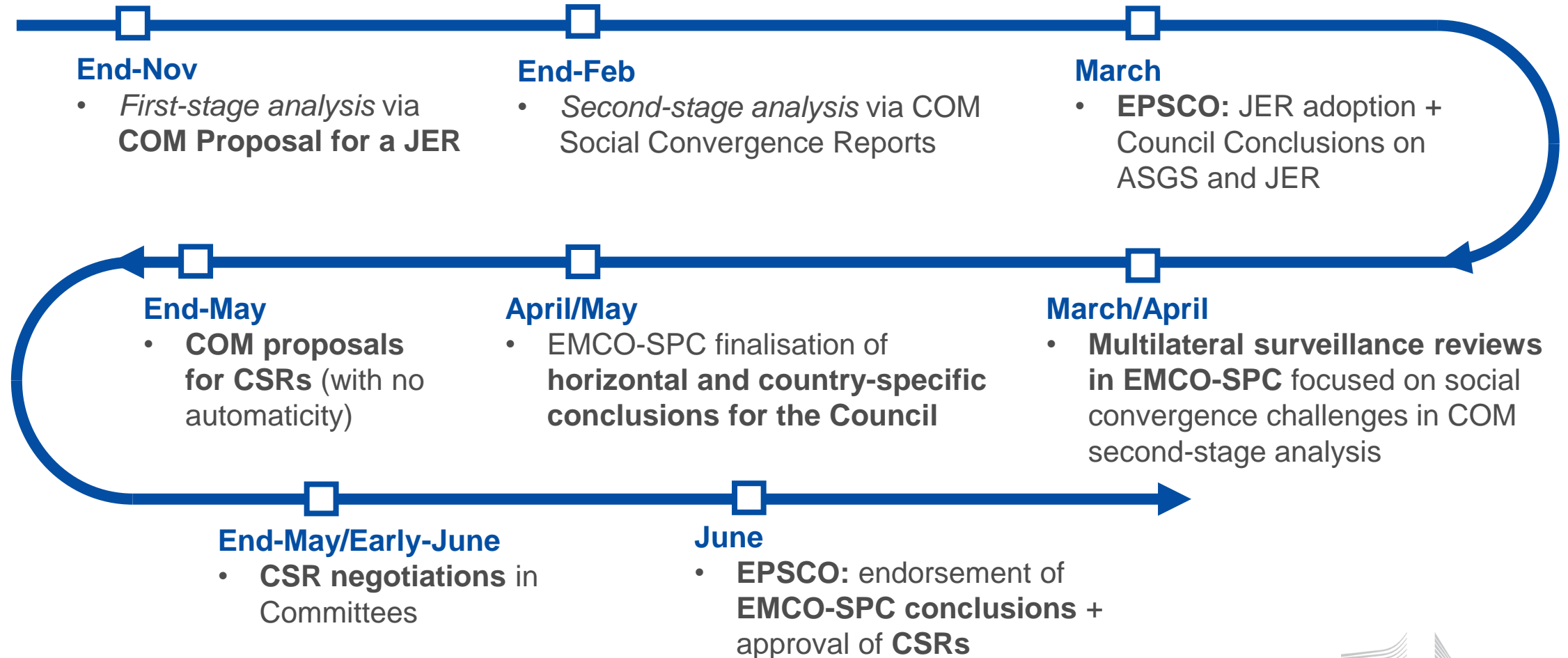
Outcome of the pilot

According to the findings of the examination by EMCO and SPC, a Social Convergence Framework in the European Semester would be:

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- × Not a new procedure;
 - ✓ An analytical framework for a more systematic monitoring of employment and social developments;
 - ✓ Run together with Member States to promote upward social convergence in the Union and better identify risks, in line with the *European Pillar of Social Rights*.
 - ✓ Based on refined existing tools, notably the *Social Scoreboard*, the *JER* and the *EMCO-SPC multilateral surveillance activities*;
 - × Without entailing new reporting obligations.
 - ✓ Based on Art. 148 TFEU and fully in line with the *Commission's proposals on the Economic Governance Review*;
 - × Without interfering nor prejudging the outcome of the *Economic Governance Review*.

3. The Social Convergence Framework: possible design

Possible timeline within the European Semester



1. First stage of the analysis

- **Risks to social convergence** identified via a first **reading of the Social Scoreboard** in the COM proposal for a Joint Employment Report as part of the *Semester Autumn Package*
- **The risks are identified by aggregating information from individual Social Scoreboard headline indicators**, using a dedicated methodology discussed with EMCO and SPC (that relies on the agreed JER traffic-light methodology)



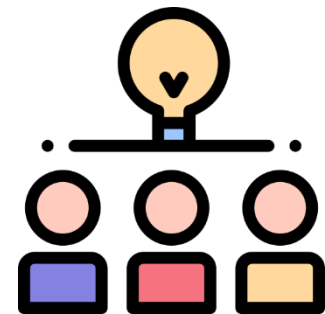
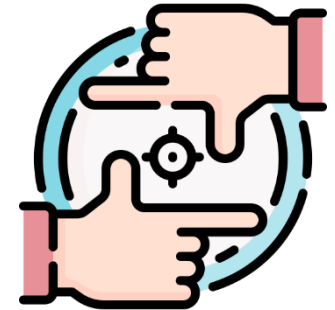
2. *Second stage of the analysis*

- On the basis of the Member States and policy areas identified in the first stage as potentially experiencing risks, an **evaluation would follow on whether challenges to upward social convergence are actually present**
- Deeper analysis based on wide **quantitative and qualitative evidence** (including *progress towards the 2030 national targets*)



3. Multilateral surveillance in EPSCO and its Committees

- The annual country-specific reviews by EMCO and SPC would become **more focused on the challenges identified in the two-stage analysis of the Social Convergence Framework**
- This would **foster a shared understanding of challenges and ownership of possible remedial policy actions**
- **Horizontal and country-specific conclusions** would be **endorsed by the EPSCO Council**



4. *Country-specific recommendations (CSRs)*

- The analysis of challenges run via the Social Convergence Framework would **provide the analytical underpinning for the COM reflection on CSR proposals** in the *Semester Spring Package*
- There would be **no automaticity** between the findings of the framework and the CSR proposals



4. Broader (related) institutional developments

Broader institutional developments in 2023



European Parliament

15 March and 11 May:
Resolutions 2022/2151 and 2023/2586 calling “on the Commission to present a Social Convergence Framework”



Comité économique et social européen
European Economic and Social Committee

26 April:
Opinion SOC/748 calling for an instrument “facilitating upward social convergence”



European Commission

26 April:
Legislative proposals, incl. new Regulation for a “stronger and more effective European Semester”

ES-BE Pres initiative on social investment

A reflection on the **role of social investment in EU governance** launched jointly by the current ES Presidency and the forthcoming BE Presidency

