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Deliverable 7.8

# THE NEED FOR AND ROLE OF GOOD INDICATORS AND VALORISATION

## Strategic briefing on linking with policy innovation

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## Abstract

Strategic futuring and advancement of the research infrastructure within the frame of the InGRID-2 project has been investigated and debated in WP7 of the project. In order to facilitate this strategic briefing note, reports of gaps in the research infrastructures in CEE and Southeast Europe were prepared and accompanying roadmaps of improvement were composed. Starting from a users' needs survey (reported in D7.5. of the project), three strategic briefing notes are drafted on data challenges (D7.6), on methodological challenges (D7.7), and on policy challenges and indicator-building (D7.8). The current report provides a summary on linking with policy innovation. In what follows, the need for good Indicators to inform policymaking is highlighted in Section 1. Then, in Section 2 we explain how the InGRID-2 project has tried to develop key indicators in the areas of work and social policy. Within this, we highlight two cases that were key elements of indicator development throughout the INGRID project: the work on the Integrated Poverty and Living Conditions Indicator System (IPOLIS) and the work on the *institutional characteristics of trade unions, wage setting, state intervention and social pacts* (ICTWSS) database. Section 3 finally presents some overall reflections.



This report constitutes Deliverable 7.8, for Work Package 7 of the InGRID-2 project.

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# Contents

# 1. Introduction: the need for good indicators to inform policymaking

## 1.1 Academics, policymakers and policy analysts

Never before has there been such a great need for evidence-based policymaking in the world in general, in the European Union in particular and in the EU Member States. To create, communicate, or consult new information is relatively easy, however, the need for credible sources and authentic opinions has never been more pressing. As set in our previous reports, '*the InGRID-1 and InGRID-2 research infrastructure projects are positioned on the intersection line between evidence-based policymaking and academic research by supporting and facilitating research on inclusive growth in Europe. In addition to addressing and filling existing data and research gaps, it is important to reflect on the current challenges researchers and policymakers face.*' (D7.5. p. 4)

Messages of the current report start from the main observations of a user survey that reached out to data users and which was presented in D7.5. That survey attempted to identify and prioritise data users' needs with regard to access to data, the use of proper methods and also to link policy innovations. The survey was sent out to actual and potential data users, experts and policymakers in the fields of living and working conditions, poverty, vulnerability or precariousness, inclusion, social and labour policy, and related domains with regard to data, methods, tools, etc. Although the general response rate to the original survey was fairly low (out of slightly less than 5,000 experts contacted we had in total 248 people (5%) fully completing the user survey) and even within that the number of policymakers was a minority (16.5% of our sample, which accounts for 41 respondents), we can shortly summarise the opinions of this expert group and also the answers of the academic community members to questions that were at least relevant for policymaking.

First and foremost, bridging the gap between policymaking and research is considered as an important challenge for policy-oriented research and evidence-based policymaking. Second, when asked about priorities and highly important issues, academics and policymakers seemed to be in general agreement regarding the top five challenges: both groups identify the 'limited cooperation between researchers and policymakers' as the main challenge, followed by 'the lack awareness of available research outcomes and their usability among policymakers' and 'the mismatch between policy and research cycles and thematic priorities'. Also 'communication issues and lack of mutual understanding' and 'limited cooperation among researchers' were frequently mentioned as challenges by both groups. Under the general agreements though, some nuances in weights given to the various issues appeared. Policymakers more than academics indicated that issues such as 'lack of trust and openness', 'lack of resources to conduct state-of-the art policy-oriented research' and 'challenging political climate' are important challenges concerning this issue.

When respondents were asked to explain how InGRID-2 can best help to bridge the gap between data and policy, it was highlighted that InGRID-2 could increase the interaction between both parties through events such as round tables, seminars, workshops, and conferences. Also, it was emphasised that InGRID-2 could improve communication by 'advertising' research results by more easily accessible ways of communication like short policy-oriented articles, podcasts, presentations, graphs, newsletters, visualisations, and infographics, in addition to long and complex research reports and peer-reviewed journal articles. It was also emphasised that universities, governments and other financing bodies can contribute to bridging the gap by putting more value to non-academic output.

Finally, it was mentioned that joint trainings and more frequent networks between policymakers and researchers could help in better profilerating between academia and policy.

## 1.2 The European policy context

Perhaps the most important headline ambition of the six set out by the von der Leyen Commission was about building *'An economy that works for people'* that included a process of dialogue and consultation to prepare the ground for an action plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) and a number of related legal instruments as well as institutional measures to put the European economy into a new gear. Measures proposed included legal instruments on fair minimum wages, a proposal for a European unemployment reinsurance scheme, a new European child guarantee, as an important means of fighting poverty and ensuring children have access to basic services and a reinforced the youth guarantee, to help young people to get the education, training and job opportunities they need. Although the outburst of the pandemic in 2020 raised obstacles towards the timely realisation of these measures and instruments, the commitment remains to be there and, also, important steps are taken towards progress as soon as the pandemic will be over. The continued commitment to reinforcing the main principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights, together with steps toward the minimum wages guarantee, unemployment reinsurance, child guarantee and youth guarantee are arguably even more relevant in present circumstances than they were before, not only in their own right, but to demonstrate the value of the Union for people - and governments - right across Europe.

A common characteristic of these planned measures is their severe need for relevant, properly contextualised and timely data that may support decision making for policy reforms. While the measurement of progress is well based on indicators developed and data sources improved in the early process of the building up the OMC and also the continued monitoring of these indicators by the machinery of the EC services and the member states as well, a major step ahead was the designation of the Social Scoreboard to frame the monitoring process.[1]

## 1.3 The social scoreboard

The list of headline indicators of the European Pillar of Social Rights has been proposed to be renewed by the EC in the beginning of 2021 and it was endorsed by the Ministers of Employment and Social Affairs of the European Union in June 2021. The aim of this indicator set is to serve as a monitoring tool for the process of socio-economic convergence between the EU Member States. Its three main dimensions (referring back to the three main priorities of the EPSR) are **equal opportunities** in skills development, life-long learning and active support for employment, **fair working conditions** to measure the evenness between flexibility and security to facilitate job creation, job take-up and the adaptability of firms, and **promoting social dialogue and social protection and inclusion**, to reflect access to health, social protection benefits and high quality services, including childcare, healthcare and long-term care, which are essential to ensure a dignified living and protection against life's risks.

The scoreboard of key indicators serves as a reference framework to monitor societal progress in the member states when regular reports are published on the most important employment and social

1 Just to mention the major steps of this process leading to this, we highlight some of the milestones here: 2000: announcement of the Lisbon strategy and introduction of the OMC (Open Method of Coordination). 2001: establishment of the indicators' sub-group of the Social Protection Committee (SPC). 2005: integration of the three strands of the OMC - social inclusion, pensions and health and long-term care - were integrated into one framework, the open method of coordination on social protection and social inclusion. 2008: the European Commission's renewed social agenda: opportunities, access and solidarity in 21st century Europe. 2010: the Europe 2020 strategy on smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, with its flagship initiative being the 'European platform against poverty'. 2013: adaptation of the European Commissions' social investment package (SIP). 2017: announcing the European pillar of social rights and the social scoreboard. 2021: announcement of the action plan of the social pillar, with some narrowing down of the priorities of the original EPSR (to the three headline targets of employment, education/skills and poverty reduction).

developments. This way the monitoring tool also allows benchmarking national outcomes to European peers. The data for the scoreboard in provided by Eurostat and its various surveys of social statistics such as the EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) or the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC).

In sum, EU social indicators in a broader sense are used to officially monitor the European targets on poverty and social exclusion, to prepare the European semester while they also help identifying key social trends in the EU and they also support the drafting of various general and thematic reports to facilitate EU level analytical work and benchmarking in field of social policy.

# 2. The added value of two InGRID products to European social analysis and policy advice

It is among the very aims of InGRID (which is a network of distributed but integrating European research infrastructures) to serve the social sciences community that wants to make an evidence-based contribution to a European policy strategy of inclusive growth. In addition, it is also the aim of the project to create sustainable infrastructures that can support European policymaking with innovative tools to access relevant analyses and data produced by the European research community, living and working in very diverse corners of Europe.

In what follows, we present two cases for this: the examples of the Integrated Poverty and Living Conditions Indicator System (IPOLIS) on the one hand and the Institutional Characteristics of Trade Unions, Wage Setting, State Intervention and Social Pacts (ICTWSS) database on the other. Both of these are intended to build bridges between academia and policy both on a European level and on national levels.

## 2.1 The Integrated Poverty and Living Conditions Indicator System (IPOLIS)

### 2.1.1 The process of building up IPOLIS and its main characteristics

IPOLIS was the core outcome of the work package on innovative tools and protocols for poverty and living conditions research of the InGRID project. Then, within the InGRID-2 project, IPOLIS was also in the focus of research activities under the 'Poverty and living conditions' pillar. The extension and further development of IPOLIS under InGRID-2 was carried out within the frame of WP8 'Data harmonisation and integration regarding poverty and living conditions'.

IPOLIS fits within the frame defined by the overall InGRID project objectives according to several respects.

- IPOLIS is related to all three focus areas of the project: (1) relies and integrates harmonised data; (2) links data, specifically quality of life outcomes with policies and (3) promotes indicator development.
- Material living conditions in general and poverty and social exclusion in particular (also as defined by the Europe 2020 strategy target), stays at the core of the integrated indicator system.
- IPOLIS is conceived to be an innovative tool by including interactive data visualisation.
- It will allow not only researchers, but also the broader stakeholder community to follow the situation of most vulnerable groups.
- It builds mainly on the European statistical system, while other data sources are also considered as inputs.

The aim of the work regarding IPOLIS was to build a platform to improve infrastructure for monitoring, analysing and evaluating the situation of the most vulnerable groups (Gábos & Kopasz, 2014). Nine specific vulnerable groups were identified at the beginning of our work in InGRID:

1. easy-to-reach groups: (a) children (0-17 years), (b) young people (15-30 years) and (c) older people (65+ years);
2. hard-to-identify groups: (d) migrants and people with migrant background, (e) Roma, (f) travellers;
3. hard-to-reach groups: (g) institutionalised people, (h) undocumented immigrants and (i) homeless people.

The building up of IPOLIS can be divided into two separate phases. In the first phase (under InGRID, 2013-2017), IPOLIS was produced for the easy-to-reach, age-specific vulnerable groups: children, young people and older people. The selection of these three vulnerable social groups was supported by the following considerations:

- the risk of poverty and of social exclusion is higher than population average for children, young adults and older people in almost all countries, when examined by age (e.g. Eurostat 2010);
- age easily identifies groups both in administrative and survey type data collections, which is not the case with other attributes;
- important prior efforts to monitor poverty, living conditions, quality of life and well-being exist for these age groups, especially for children.

After the delivery of the first phase of IPOLIS to the European Commission in February 2016 (database) and in February 2017 (visualisation tool). For the setup of the indicators of the monitoring system and for carefully analysing myriads of topical methodological problems and decisions, a number of research papers/deliverables were drafted, discussed and published (Gábos & Kopasz, 2014, 2015; Schäfer, Zentarra & Groh-Samberg, 2015; Kopasz, 2015; Limani, 2017).

The second phase of the IPOLIS project focused on extending the indicator system database with additional vulnerable groups, once they can be coherently identified in a large data infrastructure and robust indicators can be produced. The details on the extension of IPOLIS to include additional groups were set out in additional working papers (Bernát & Messing, 2016; Schepers, Juchtmans & Nicaise, 2017).

As a result, the IPOLIS database was further developed to better facilitate new research on poverty, living conditions and social policy, as well as to extend it with additional vulnerable groups. Four groups were considered, such as (i.) disabled people, (ii.) migrant people and people with migrant background, (iii.) Roma people and (iv.) people living in institutions.

After careful evaluation of the underlying data infrastructure (see Gábos & Kopasz, 2018, also involving knowledge from the participants of the expert workshop on 'Methods and data infrastructure to measure the quality of life of various vulnerable groups: extending IPOLIS', held on 25-27 April 2018 in Budapest), the selection of disabled people and migrants has been decided for the extension of IPOLIS under the InGRID-2 project.[2] Nevertheless, a methodological and data infrastructure report on these four vulnerable groups was also prepared under InGRID-2 (Gábos *et al.* 2020).

### 2.1.2 The value added of IPOLIS for academia and policy

The overall aim of IPOLIS did not change though the development process:

- to improve infrastructure for analysing and monitoring the situation of most vulnerable groups in general;

2 While the data infrastructure on the Roma is improving (see Bernát & Messing, 2016), it cannot yet provide statistically robust and timely data for most of the countries where the share of Roma population is considerably high. As the institutionalised population is concerned, the data infrastructure is poorly developed and far from being able to provide indicators for IPOLIS or for any similar initiative.

- to monitor the situation of children, young people, older people, people with migrant background and people with disabilities in particular, in the fields of poverty, living conditions and quality of life; and
- to explore relationships between indicators and to detect cross-country patterns according to selected measures.

It was always conceived to serve as a resource for various user groups (researchers, policymakers at different levels, NGO experts, journalists, students, etc.).

The value added of IPOLIS lies in its integrated system, in its broad definition of quality of life domains and in the visualisation tool that makes analysis easy and user friendly.
- The importance of integration comes from the fact that while data and indicators in the field of poverty, living conditions and quality of life are widely available, it is rarely possible to analysed in a harmonised database the interlinkages across various domains of the quality of life. IPOLIS provides at the same time an integrated, multidimensional frame for analyses and interpretation, a selection of most relevant measures.
- The easy-to-handle and flexible visualisation tool helps users to explore the database and to detect cross-country and cross-time patterns and correlations in a flexible, user-oriented way. The data visualisation tool attached to the IPOLIS is embedded in an online platform (www.ipolis.tarki.hu), having a mutual direct linkage with the InGRID-2 project website (link here).
- The online platform has a simple design and structure, focusing on the online tool that allows visual analytics in IPOLIS. Users can easily navigate between vulnerable group modules and find information about both the project and IPOLIS, including useful links to outputs and events related to them.

### 2.1.3 Technical aspects of IPOLIS

The actual version of the IPOLIS data visualisation tool provides users with the following options to explore the indicator database:
- cross-country comparative analysis (column charts, spider web charts);
- time-series analysis (line charts);
- bivariate correlations (scatterplots);
- paired cross-module analysis.

In addition, several in-built features assist users to prepare visual outputs that are most convenient for their purposes. The most important features are as follows:
- tutorial;
- indicator selector, including three levels: domain, indicator and breakdown;
- country selector, including options for individual country and group selection;
- year selector;
- scale fixing option;
- value displaying option;
- benchmark selector (EU-28, EU-27, EU-15, EU-12, overall/adult population where available);
- ranking and highlighting;
- direct download options as either .cvs files or images;
- share through the social media (Facebook, Twitter).

Some features are selective for specific analytical options. The public version of the IPOLIS platform was launched in February 2017 and the updated/extended version is to be opened in August 2021.

### 2.1.4 Coherence and interlinkages across domains and target groups

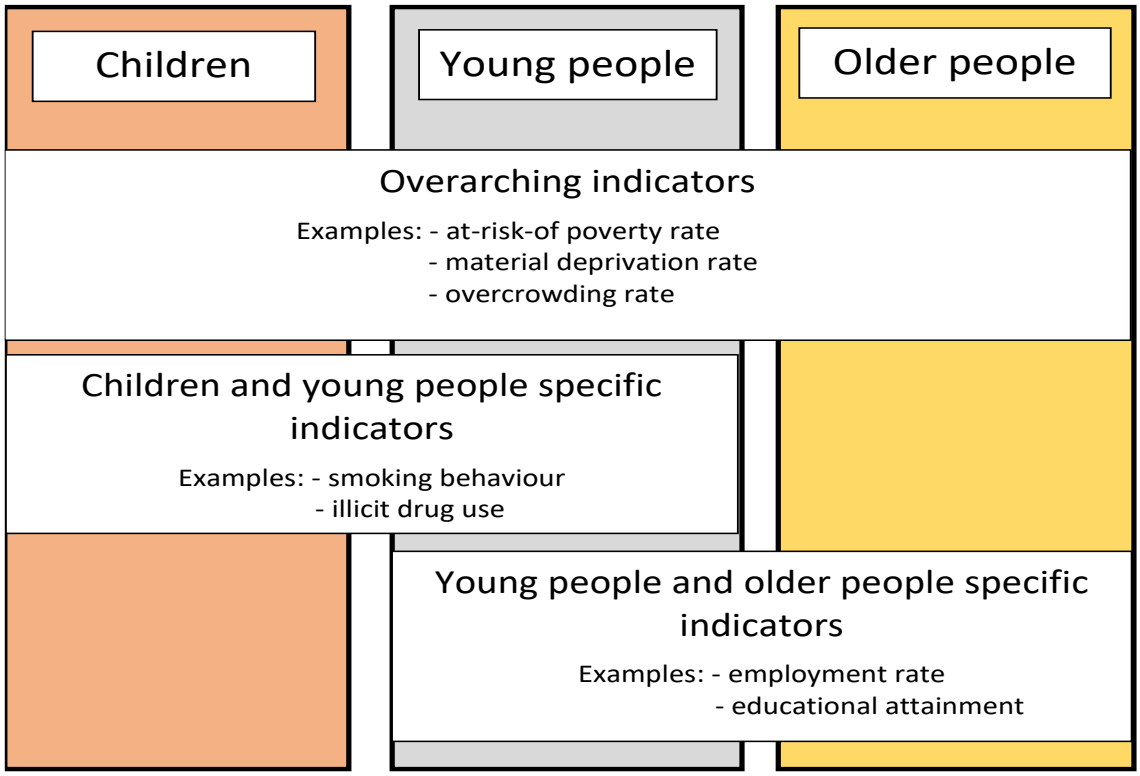
A major dilemma faced when setting up a complex database is that with very few exceptions, prior indicator system initiatives relate either to one specific vulnerable group (e.g. children, older people, etc.) or to a certain domain for the population as a whole. When setting up IPOLIS the situation was no different (Gábos & Kopasz, 2014, 2018).

For an integrated database that is carefully designed to cover special target groups AND a complex set of special domains, it is very important to

- ensure the coherence of the indicator system structure at the level of domains, components and subcomponents;
- set up direct linkages at indicator level between groups to allow for a comparative assessment of their relative positions - primarily according to the dimensions of poverty and material living conditions;
- consider that each stage of life cycle has its own characteristics and thus we need to pay special attention to age-group specific problems.

Figure 1 shows in a simplified way how the linkages between vulnerable groups like children, young people and older people were established in the first phase. Each portfolio of indicators belonging to a specific vulnerable group is represented in the figure by a differently coloured vertical rectangle. A set of indicators, referred here to as overarching indicators, characterises all three groups. These measures should have the same definition, preferably should be produced on the same data source and based on the same methodology. The application of these criteria was facilitated by the fact that vulnerable groups in the first version of IPOLIS were defined by age, but - depending on identification and data robustness - the situation was different for disabled people and migrants and people with migrant background. Further, while for household level indicators, like household income and material living conditions, the solution was relatively straightforward but for variables like perceived general health or physical activity (all relevant for all three age groups), finding a sufficiently comparable data source proved to be a difficult task. In addition, some of the potential indicators can be relevant for not only one, but two vulnerable groups. For example, this is the case with risk behaviour indicators, which are relevant for both children and young people, or with employment rate which is an important indicator for both young and older people.

**Figure 1. Linkages across vulnerable groups in the first version of IPOLIS**

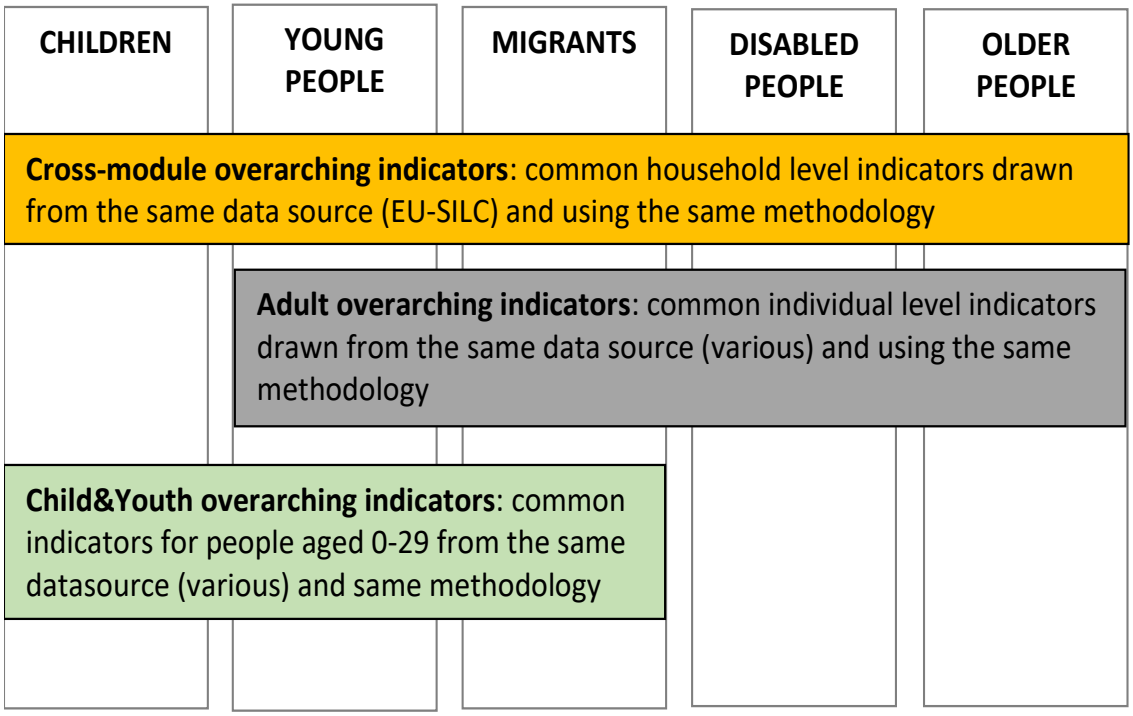



**Source** Gábos and Kopasz (2014: Fig. 1)

Figure 2 shows how the inclusion of two additional vulnerable groups has changed the picture. Similarly to what has been previously discussed, mainly household level indicators were suitable to make this link across all groups and specific variables from specific data sources had to be included for the additional target groups in the database. The groups of overarching indicators in the extended new structure was then similar to those in the simpler version of IPOLIS:

- overarching indicators: embrace all the five modules and include household level indicators, like household income and material living conditions;
- adult overarching indicators: involve all modules but children, and include individual level indicators on several aspects of quality of life;
- child and youth overarching indicators: some of the individual level indicators at young age can be relevant for not only one, but three vulnerable groups: children, young people and migrants. These indicators include, for example, risk behaviours, educational outcomes, social relations.

**Figure 2.** **Linkages across vulnerable groups in the extended IPOLIS**




**Source** Based on Gábos and Kopasz (2014: Fig. 1)

### 2.1.5 The types of analysis supported by IPOLIS

As described above, the first version of the IPOLIS data visualisation tool included three analytical options (cross-country comparison, time-series analysis and bivariate scatterplots) and two cross-module analysis opportunity for each module. The extension of IPOLIS towards disabled people and migrants and the new design of the analytical features in the data visualisation tool is presented in Figure 3. While all the three analytical options (cross-country-comparison, time series analysis and bivariate scatterplots) remained, cross-modules options were set in accordance with the incorporations of the new modules and the groups of overarching indicators previously presented in Figure 2. This analytical framework provides largest flexibility to all users to explore the underlying database.

As an example for the usefulness IPOLIS indicators for analysis with the aim to analyse and evaluate the situation of the children (as one of the most vulnerable groups in the society), as well as to inform policymaking efforts and initiatives, is provided by Limani *et al.* (2020). The report, published as an InGRID-2 working paper, aimed to contribute to such efforts by providing detailed information and analysis on children's material living conditions since the economic crisis. The main objective of the paper was to descriptively analyse child poverty and the relationship between parental background and material living conditions among children, across and within European Union (EU) member states, while also capturing trajectories in the period of and following the Great Recession. The report provides descriptive statistics on main trends, while the focus of the analysis was on the changes in indicators over time and by parental education. It covers the EU-28 member states, plus the three additional EEA member countries (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland). As a next step, the results of the analysis were linked more closely to public policies in the field, gain in a cross-European perspective (Gábos, Kopasz & Limani, 2020). This would not have been possible without the complexity and detail of IPOLIS.

**Figure 3. Analytical features across vulnerable group modules**

| CHILDREN | YOUNG PEOPLE | MIGRANTS | DISABLED PEOPLE | ELDERLY PEOPLE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cross-country analysis | Cross-country analysis | Cross-country analysis | Cross-country analysis | Cross-country analysis |
| Time series analysis | Time series analysis | Time series analysis | Time series analysis | Time series analysis |
| Bivariate scatterplots | Bivariate scatterplots | Bivariate scatterplots | Bivariate scatterplots | Bivariate scatterplots |
| Cross-module analysis | Cross-module analysis | Cross-module analysis | Cross-module analysis | Cross-module analysis |
| Child & Youth analysis | Child & Youth analysis | Child & Youth analysis | Youth & Adult analysis | Youth & Adult analysis |
| | Youth & Adult analysis | Youth & Adult analysis | | |

### 2.1.6 Challenges and tasks for further extensions

Policy analysis as such can be based on various outcome indicators on the one hand but also, for a detailed and careful analysis some genuine policy variables are needed to be incorporated. To expand on this, a specific project output (Eneroth *et al.*, 2019) was dedicated to revise and enrich the existing set of policy indicators (Limani, 2017). The aim of this task was also to tailor the set of indicators that can help the users to assess cross-country variation in quality of life outcomes against policy and context information to the vulnerable group structure of IPOLIS. The proposal tried to strike a fruitful balance between some core indicators based on legislative frameworks, and indicators on distributive impacts derived from socio-economic surveys. Considering the former, the focus was put on major cash benefit schemes of outmost importance for economic wellbeing of the vulnerable groups identified in IPOLIS. More specifically, minimum income protection (minimum wages, social assistance, and minimum pensions), unemployment benefits, sickness benefits, child benefits, and standard pensions were proposed. All these indicators are based on model family analyses, where incomes for a pre-defined set of families are calculated based on social policy legislation (Eneroth *et al.*, 2019). As detailed above, the second phase of the IPOLIS development aimed the integration of four additional vulnerable groups. Two of these (the Roma and institutionalised people) need further work in order to be ready for a full consideration.

#### The Roma

The main obstacle of including the Roma within the frame of the IPOLIS is the lack of a solid data infrastructure. This means that existing surveys are not adequate to provide a complete picture on the quality of life of the Roma on a regular basis across Europe.

The existing surveys that collect data on the Roma population in Europe, face several problems (Bernát & Messing, 2016).

- There is a lack of a baseline against which representativeness can be defined. In several countries, even the census does not include a category for 'Roma' or 'Gypsy'. Even when this is the case, censuses typically underestimate the share of Roma population, and are therefore generally imper-

fect sources for sampling. Depending on the method used to overcome this problem, the surveys may cover very different population segments (Messing, 2014).
- The definition of who is considered 'Roma' depends on how surveys operationalise the category of 'Roma', and they may end up with very different results in terms of basic indicators, such as employment rate, educational level, housing conditions, etc.
- The sensitivity of information on ethnicity, which may be very differently handled by members states – again, affecting validity and comparability.

However, quality of life indicators for Roma people would potentially be available if large-scale European-wide mainstream surveys (e.g. EU-LFS, EU-SILC, European Social Survey - ESS or the PISA) included data on the ethnic background of each respondent (Bernát & Messing, 2016: 13). This would provide a very good and comparative source for social inclusion indicators – not only across European countries, but also between the Roma and non-Roma populations in individual countries. It is important to note that there is a good practice in this respect: Hungary has already adopted this approach and the Central Statistical Office introduced a dual identification question on ethnicity to all non-compulsory surveys from 2014 (after piloting the on the LFS in 2013).[3] Until now, this is an isolated practice in the EU.

#### Institutionalised people

EU population surveys are usually restricted to private households. The exclusion of those living in collective households poses important questions.
- First, the size of the institutionalised population is not negligible, and is very likely to increase due to the growing number and percentage of older people across Europe.
- Second, a meta-analysis of surveys in the institutionalised population indicates that persons in this group differ in the distribution by age, gender, medical condition, economic activity, housing, social networks, etc.

Thus, we can assume that the inclusion of people living in institutions in general population surveys will change estimates of indicators related to these areas or indicators requested by the OMC (Eurostat, 2011; Schanze, 2017).

There are some initiatives that address those challenges. For example, the SERISS (Synergies for Europe's Research Infrastructures in the Social Sciences) project aims to better represent the European population, including important target groups for policymakers such as young unemployed, older persons in institutions and migrants; and to strengthen cross-national harmonisation of data and methodology across Europe. More specifically, the project examines the feasibility to include the institutional population into cross-national population surveys in the EU (Schanze, 2017). Also, two Eurostat coordinated cross-national surveys (EHIS, EU-LFS) allow for the inclusion of people living in institutions (Gábos & Kopasz, 2019).

## 2.2 The Institutional Characteristics of Trade Unions, Wage Setting, State Intervention and Social Pacts (ICTWSS)

### 2.2.1 The process of building up ICTWSS and its main characteristics

The up-date and extension of the ICTWSS database (https://www.oecd.org/employment/ictwss-database.htm), was the one of the core outcome of the work package 11 on data integration and

3 For more information on the HCSO pratcice, please visit the relevant persentation from the expert workshop 'Methods and data infrastructure to measure the quality of life of various vulnerable groups: extending IPOLIS', Budapest, 25-27/4/2018. http://www.inclusivegrowth.eu/expert-workshops/call-6-expert-workshop-tarki#program.

harmonisation for working conditions and vulnerability pillar of the InGRID-2 project. The main aims were on the one hand to (a) ensure a continuation of the dataset and (b) to generally up-date and extend the information available in the data set with respect to year, covered countries and covered variables (in particular on bargaining coverage, trade union memberships and minimum wages).

Originally, the database on Institutional Characteristics of Trade Unions, Wage Setting, State Intervention and Social Pacts (ICTWSS) has been developed by Prof. Jelle Visser at the University of Amsterdam. It was first released in May 2007. In its initial form, the ICTWSS database combined data from various sources and projects with a main focus on trade union in EU and OECD countries (Visser & Ebbinghaus, 2000; Visser, 1991; Visser, 2006), collective bargaining and employment relations in Europe (European Commission, 2004), and social pacts (Avdagic, Rhodes & Visser, 2011). After its first release, the database has been updated every second or third year and more variables and countries have been added.

In 2021, in the framework of the InGRID-2 project, the ICTWSS database has been rebranded as the OECD/AIAS ICTWSS database. This new name reflects the joint effort by the OECD and AIAS-HSI to ensure the continuation of the database after Prof. Visser's retirement. The OECD/AIAS ICTWSS database develops and consolidate earlier versions of the ICTWSS database, notably in providing more detailed information on minimum wage settings in OECD (Besamusca, 2019; Besamusca, Garnero & Korinth, 2021) and expanding geographical coverage to Western Balkan countries. The first version of the OECD/AIAS ICTWSS database has been released in February 2021 and has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation 'EaSI' (2014-2020), VS/2019/0185.

### 2.2.2 The value added of ICTWSS for academia and policy

The ICTWSS aims to provide researchers and policymakers with a set of country-level data in two key areas of modern political economies (see for more detail, Visser 2021):

1. the organisation and coordination of collective bargaining, wage setting, and social pacts; and
2. the organisation of employers and representation of employees in trade unions and works councils.

The database presents annual data between 1960 and 2019 for 56 countries: all current OECD and EU members: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Finland, France, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States of America – with some additional data for the G20 countries: Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Russia and South Africa; and EU accession and Balkan countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, North Macedonia.

The database contains more than 100 variables, organised in 7 groups:

1. rights of association, collective bargaining and strikes, private and public sector;
2. wage setting: state intervention, coordination, centralisation, conflict resolution, indexation, extension, derogation, etc.;
3. social pacts, central agreements and social dialogue;
4. works councils and employee representation in the enterprise;
5. employer organisations;
6. trade union membership and union density;
7. collective bargaining coverage.

### 2.2.3 The types of analysis supported by ICTWSS

The ICTWSS lends itself to analyses in the broad fields of industrial relations, welfare states, labour economics and labour market institutions and stratification. The indicators presented in the ICTWSS facilitate policy comparisons, for example in regard to the centralisation of wage bargaining, the analysis of social pacts or the organisation of employers and workers' representatives. During the InGRID2 project, particular efforts were made to deepen the available data on minimum wage policy, which has (re-)gained the attention of academics and policymakers in recent years (Besamusca, 2019). First, politically, statutory minimum wages are increasingly seen as an instrument to fight in-work poverty in line with predistribution and social investment policy ideals, as evidenced by the draft directive on adequate minimum wages in the EU. The draft directive has sparked interest in minimum wage policies among thinktanks and policy institutions, who can use the ICTWSS to compare minimum wage policy models across countries. Academically, the ICTWSS data on minimum wages can be used to answer three main open questions: (1) the relation between minimum wage fixing regimes and policy goals like curbing poverty and inequality; (2) the involvement and power relations of social partners in minimum wage fixing; and (3) the consequences of differentiated minimum wage rates. The revamped ICTWSS database fills a gap in the EU data infrastructure, where information on the level of earned wages and minimum wages is readily available while information on the characteristics of minimum wage policies were missing.

Furthermore, the ICTWSS offers a range of indicators that can be employed to measure institutional characteristics in country comparative studies of economic or labour market performance. Most prominently, the variables of collective bargaining coverage and trade union density, both of which have been updated as well as harmonised, are used in many academic studies as a proxy for trade union strength and the institutionalisation of collective bargaining. Thanks to the large efforts of the OECD team, the revamped ICTWSS contains higher quality time series for both variables, enabling more longitudinal research.

### 2.2.4 Technical aspects of ICTWSS

The ICTWSS provides users on the one hand with a downloadable dataset containing information for all countries, years and included indicators. On the other hand, users are also able to customise their request via a newly developed user-interface (www.ictwss.org). Here, users can download, based on their needs, tables and visualisations (such as bar and line charts) based on a selection of variables, countries and years.

The most important features assisting users in their request are:

1. indicator selector (including breakdowns);
2. country selector (including individual and group of country selection);
3. year selector; as well as the option
4. to download those customised request either as cvs files or images.

An additional feature, of the new data interface is that country experts can enter data on the website backside.

The actual version of the ICTWSS provides users with the following options to explore the database:

- cross-country comparative analysis (tables and column charts);
- time-series analysis (tables and line charts).

### 2.2.5 Challenges and tasks for further extensions

Over the course of the InGRID-2 project and with the support of the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation 'EaSI' (2014-2020, VS/2019/0185), the OECD/AIAS ICTWSS presents a consolidated version of the ICTWSS with high quality harmonised data, a longer time series, 56 countries. Crucially, its continuation in future years has been secured. Building on these achievements, a number of challenges to improve the data and relevance of the ICTWSS remain.

First, in the development from the ICTWSS to the OECD/AIAS ICTWSS, the scope of the database was reduced from 11 to 7 substantive groups due to data quality. Based on the available data on the four remaining groups, comprehensive harmonisation and data quality checks were considered infeasible within the time frame and resources of the InGRID2 project. This concerns the topics of (1) sectoral institutions and employer organisations, (2) number and membership of trade unions and union confederations, (3) membership shares, conflicts and divisions between and within trade union confederations, and (4) break downs of union membership and union density rates, for example by gender, occupation or sector. Since no comprehensive data infrastructures exist that can offer alternatives, the first challenge of the ICTWSS is to preserve and harmonise this part of the database for the future, preferably in cooperation with the ILO, Eurofound and social partners.

Secondly, data on employer density is much more scarcely available than data on trade union density. Since scholarship on collective bargaining and industrial relations indicates that employer behaviour and attitudes are crucial to maintain high levels of (sector level) collective bargaining and centralisation of wage setting, this represents an important data gap.

Thirdly, the methodology for the classification of minimum wage policies and minimum wage fixing regimes, which was developed in the context of the InGRID-2 project, will need to gain be tested and gain prominence in academic research. Furthermore, for longitudinal analyses, this group of variables will need to be backcoded to previous years

# 3. Concluding remarks

This paper explains how the major achievements of a research infrastructure project can be utilised by a broader academic and policymaker community. The ultimate aim of InGRID-2 was defined with reference to the increasingly challenging EU2020-ambitions of Inclusive Growth, and it was aimed to advance the integration and innovation of distributed social sciences research infrastructures (RI) on 'poverty, living conditions and social policies' as well as 'working conditions, vulnerability and labour policies'. In addition to extending transnational on-site and virtual access and organisation of mutual learning and discussions of innovations, it was also the aim to improve data services and facilities of comparative research. The focus areas were (1) integrated and harmonised data, (2) links between policy and practice, and (3) indicator-building tools. Among these, InGRID-2 brought up many innovative concepts and institutional solution to better serve the infrastructure needs of the research community, together with policymakers and all those who wish to better understand pressing challenges of our societies.

In this paper we focused on two key achievements of the InGRID-2 project the Integrated Poverty and Living Conditions Indicator System (IPOLIS) on the one hand, and the Institutional Characteristics of Trade Unions, Wage Setting, State Intervention and Social Pacts (ICTWSS) database on the other. For both tools, an overview was provided showing how they were created, what processes lead to the set up of these infrastructures, what their added value is to the target expert communities, what the technical aspects of these infrastructures are and finally what future challenges might arise for the extension of these tools.

Based on that it became hopefully evident to the key users, such as social scientists using comparative RIs and political stakeholder, that investing in collaborative efforts to improve and complement social sciences RIs is an important and valuable exercise. The benefits of the InGRID-2 achievements and innovations - as demonstrated through the tools of IPOLIS and ICTWSS - will hopefully be recognised through an intensive use by the scientific community and policymakers in their own work.

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# InGRID-2
# Integrating Research Infrastructure for European expertise on Inclusive Growth from data to policy

Referring to the increasingly challenging EU2020-ambitions of Inclusive Growth, the objectives of the InGRID-2 project are to advance the integration and innovation of distributed social sciences research infrastructures (RI) on 'poverty, living conditions and social policies' as well as on 'working conditions, vulnerability and labour policies'. InGRID-2 will extend transnational on-site and virtual access, organise mutual learning and discussions of innovations, and improve data services and facilities of comparative research. The focus areas are (a) integrated and harmonised data, (b) links between policy and practice, and (c) indicator-building tools.
Lead users are social scientist involved in comparative research to provide new evidence for European policy innovations. Key science actors and their stakeholders are coupled in the consortium to provide expert services to users of comparative research infrastructures by investing in collaborative efforts to better integrate microdata, identify new ways of collecting data, establish and improve harmonised classification tools, extend available policy databases, optimise statistical quality, and set-up micro-simulation environments and indicator-building tools as important means of valorisation. Helping scientists to enhance their expertise from data to policy is the advanced mission of InGRID-2. A new research portal will be the gateway to this European science infrastructure.

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More detailed information is available on the website: www.inclusivegrowth.eu

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