
CULTURE, CREATIVITY and INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

CLUSTER 2 CONFIGURATION
OF THE HORIZON EUROPE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

WORKSHOP on
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS

13 February 2025 14h-17h



WELCOME and INTRODUCTION



DRAFT ORIENTATIONS WP 2026-27

PRELIMINARY GAP ANALYSIS

TRANSFORMATIONS

Innovative Research on Social
and Economic Transformations

Strategic plan 2025-27: Strengthening social and economic resilience and sustainability - Boosting inclusive growth and reducing vulnerabilities effectively

- Increase knowledge on the multifaceted impacts of various drivers of change, such as technological advancements, global trade patterns, climate change, shifting demographics, and mobility and migration trend.
- Deepen understanding on how ongoing changes impact society with a special emphasis on boosting inclusive growth and effectively reducing vulnerabilities.

Priorities already promoted (draft Work Programme 2025)

- **Socio-economic resilience and sustainability:** lessons from past industrial transitions; working time reduction; migration and climate change; learning environments and digital tools
- **Addressing vulnerabilities:** tackling gender-based violence; gender differences in career trajectories; increased autonomy for persons with disabilities; mental health in education, training and work

DRAFT ORIENTATIONS WP 2026-27

PRELIMINARY GAP ANALYSIS

TRANSFORMATIONS

Innovative Research on Social
and Economic Transformations

Gaps – Tentative Orientations

- Partnership on Social Transformations and Resilience
- Facilitate labour mobility and simplify social security coordination
- Understand occupational health and safety risks in workplaces
- Examine long-term care (LTC) workforce challenges
- Strengthen Europe's social model and competitiveness through productivity
- Social justice and environment
- Support research on education with a joint focus on students, and teaching and academic staff;
- Deepen the understanding of the role of education systems in addressing current (and future) challenges and needs;
- Address demographic shifts : empowering ageing; incl long-term impacts on public health, access to care and public budgets
- Support well-being and social inclusion : focus on mental health; youth, rights of persons with disabilities (e.g. labour gap);
- Migration research on integration; focus on health, social inclusion

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS

Co-funded European Partnership for Social Transformations & Resilience

EXPECTED OUTCOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research funders, policymakers and research communities in the social sciences and humanities (SSH) are provided with a multi-annual R&I programme on social transformations and resilience, responding to the green, digital and demographic transitions and unexpected shocks.• Research investments on social protection and essential services, future of work, education and skills, and a fair transition to climate neutrality are increased.• Stakeholders and policymakers are provided with evidence-based knowledge, tools and innovative solutions, which contribute to new policies and strategies for strengthening resilience, fairness, inclusiveness and social cohesion at European, national and regional level.
RESEARCH GAPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Magnitude of social transformations and heterogeneity in welfare systems, social infrastructures and labour markets call for inter- and transdisciplinary knowledge and resource sharing• Transdisciplinary collaboration with non-academic stakeholders, like social partners, employment agencies, and civil society is limited.• Uptake of SSH research in policymaking is limited.
POLICY CONTEXT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• European Pillar of Social Rights• Union of Skills• EU Green Deal and 2030 digital targets

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS

THREE CHAPEAU AREAS:

1) Boosting Sustainable Economy

2) Reducing vulnerabilities

3) Drivers of change

CHAPEAU AREA 1: BOOSTING SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

- **Measurement of young people's competences for the green transition**
- **How a competitive social economy can boost sustainable European competitiveness**
- **How does access to nature promote social cohesion and reduce inequalities?**
- **Strengthen Europe's social model and competitiveness through productivity**
- **Basic and STEM skills to promote employability, innovation and competitiveness**
- **The impact of non-educational digital tools on educational performance**
- **The effective use of artificial intelligence in learning environments**

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS

Research area: Measurement of young people's competences for the green transition

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Policymakers and educational stakeholders understand which competences young people need to support the EU economy towards the green transition;
- Policymakers and educational stakeholders receive actionable advice on which education and training programmes and policy measures can promote the acquisition of those competences

RESEARCH GAPS

- Poor availability of quantitative data on young people's competences for the green transition, both at national and international levels
- More data and analysis from research on competences for the green transition is needed to properly implement the Union of Skills

POLICY CONTEXT

- Union of Skills ([Von der Leyen's Political Guidelines 2024-29](#))
- European Education Area
- [Draghi Report](#)

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS

Research area : How a competitive social economy can boost sustainable European competitiveness ?

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Social enterprises, traditional firms and investors will benefit from a better understanding of the sustainable competitiveness factors of the social economy in Europe through knowledge development and know-how on: innovative products and services, improving quality and productivity, and increasing adaptability.
- Citizens and private sector will benefit from the increased contribution of the social economy to the EU's competitiveness and shared prosperity goals. The research will inform policy makers on policy and regulatory reforms aimed at enhancing the social economy's contribution to the EU's competitiveness and prosperity goals.

RESEARCH GAPS

- Appreciate the multifaceted contribution that social economy actors make in shaping and advancing sustainable competitiveness within and across the EU society.

POLICY CONTEXT

- The political guidelines (2024-2029) referring to the need to “Invest massively in our sustainable competitiveness”

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS

Research area: How does access to nature promote social cohesion and reduce inequalities?

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Policymakers will have robust evidence on the impact of lack of access to nature/green spaces on social inequality (e.g. poverty, social cohesion of vulnerable groups) as well as its potential to enhance wellbeing, identity, sense of place, culture shaping and social inclusion.
- Mapping and development of methodologies to assess social returns of policies for renaturing and access to green spaces.

RESEARCH GAPS

- Knowledge about the different ways in which environmental degradation and lack of access to nature exacerbate existing socio-economic inequalities.
- Determinants influencing the interdependence between natural capital and community wellbeing, identity, sense of place, culture shaping and social cohesion are poorly understood.

POLICY CONTEXT

- **EU Biodiversity Strategy** for 2030
- Kunming-Montreal **Global Biodiversity Framework**
- European **Pillar of Social Rights** principle 3, equal opportunities
- **EU Anti-Poverty strategy**: Increasing quality of life across all socio-economic categories

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS

Research area: Strengthen Europe's social model and competitiveness through productivity

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Policymakers are provided with a set of policies, including a toolbox to boost EU (labour) productivity while ensuring high social standards in Europe and increasing competitiveness.

RESEARCH GAPS

- Conceptualising sustainable competitiveness and notably how to ensure high social and environmental standards at the same time, keeping in mind the interdependencies between these objectives.

POLICY CONTEXT

- Growth in the EU has been slowing, driven by weakening productivity growth, calling into question Europe's ability to meet its ambitions (Draghi Report)
- Priority 1 of President von der Leyen's Political Guidelines for the Commission of 2024-29 outlines a new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness including a Union of Skills.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS

Research area: Basic and STEM skills to promote employability, innovation and competitiveness

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Policymakers understand the long-term impact of basic and STEM skills on the economy, with a focus on labour market outcomes, contribution to innovation and productivity to sustain EU competitiveness;
- Policymakers receive actionable advice on how EU education and training systems can nurture the links between basic and STEM skills and other skills to promote employability, innovation and competitiveness.

RESEARCH GAPS

- Causal evidence on the economic impact of basic and STEM skills is still lacking, both at microeconomic and macroeconomic levels, mostly due to limited use of longitudinal data
- Better evidence on this topic is necessary to properly implement the Union of Skills

POLICY CONTEXT

- Union of Skills ([Von der Leyen's Political Guidelines 2024-29](#))
- European Education Area
- STEM Education Strategic Plan ([Von der Leyen's Political Guidelines 2024-29](#))
- Action Plan on Basic Skills ([EVP Minzatu mission letter](#))
- Review of the Digital Education Action Plan ([EVP Minzatu mission letter](#))
- [Draghi Report](#)

6

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS

Research area: The impact of non-educational digital tools on educational performance

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Policymakers and citizens understand how the use of various social media, online gaming and other internet-based applications affect the educational performance of young people, including through their impact on well-being;
- Policymakers receive actionable advice about policies and programmes aiming to regulate young people's use of digital tools for non-educational purposes, such as smartphones, at school.

RESEARCH GAPS

- There is still limited causal evidence on how non-educational use of digital tools affects educational performance, at all educational levels, because most of the literature is simply correlational;
- Most existing research is from extra-EU contexts, which limits the transferability of findings to EU education and training systems

POLICY CONTEXT

- Union of Skills ([Von der Leyen's Political Guidelines 2024-29](#))
- European Education Area
- Review of the Digital Education Action Plan ([EVP Minzatu mission letter](#))
- EU-wide inquiry on the broader impacts of social media on well-being ([Von der Leyen's Political Guidelines 2024-29](#))

7

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS

Research area: The effective use of artificial intelligence in learning environments

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Policymakers and educational stakeholders understand the impact of artificial intelligence tools in education and training, with a focus on their effectiveness in fostering personalised learning;
- Teachers and trainers can make an effective use of artificial intelligence tools in their work

RESEARCH GAPS

- There is limited causal evidence on how artificial intelligence can improve learning outcomes and enhance the teaching profession;
- Most existing research is from extra-EU contexts, which limits the transferability of findings to EU education and training systems

POLICY CONTEXT

- Union of Skills ([Von der Leyen's Political Guidelines 2024-29](#))
- European Education Area
- Review of the Digital Education Action Plan ([EVP Minzatu mission letter](#))
- EU Teachers Agenda ([EVP Minzatu mission letter](#))
- [Draghi Report](#)

CHAPEAU AREA 2: REDUCING VULNERABILITIES

- **Tackling child poverty and ensuring children at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE)'s access to ECEC**
- **Impact of in-kind benefits on income distribution and on vulnerable populations**
- **Perspectives for EU labour mobility**
- **Persons with disabilities: opportunities for labour inclusion and social protection through the life course**
- **Causes for declining basic skills of young people and effective remedial measures**
- **Improving social and socio-economic outcomes for people with dementia, caregivers and their support network**

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS

Research area: Tackling child poverty and ensuring children at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE)'s access to ECEC

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Policymakers gain insights into the cost of child poverty and the returns from securing access of children AROPE to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in the EU
- Policymakers receive operational advice on ways to reduce this cost and support participation of children AROPE in ECEC to close the gap with other children

RESEARCH GAPS

- Insufficient research on the cost of child poverty
- Insufficient longitudinal and EU-specific research on returns from/ways to secure children AROPE's participation in ECEC

POLICY CONTEXT

- Principle 11 of the European Pillar of Social Rights (Childcare and support to children) – and Action Plan's target (reduce the number of children AROPE by at least 5 million before 2030)
- European Child Guarantee / Barcelona targets

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS

Research area: Impact of in-kind benefits on income distribution and on vulnerable populations

<p>EXPECTED OUTCOMES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy makers gain insights into the redistributive role of in-kind benefits (services and service provision systems to households), both on income groups and vulnerable populations • Policy makers receive operational advice to make informed policy choices to reduce inequality, and strengthen fairness and cohesion
<p>RESEARCH GAPS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor empirical knowledge basis (except for healthcare), unlike the impact of cash benefits • A comprehensive measurement framework based on methods, tools and indicators is currently missing.
<p>POLICY CONTEXT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Pillar of Social Rights (chapter III: Social protection and inclusion) • Sustainable Development Goal 10: Reduced inequalities • Strong link to the political guidelines 2024-2029, in particular the EU anti-poverty strategy, and to the continuation of the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, reflecting the EU commitment to the UNCRPD.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS

Research area: Perspectives for EU labour mobility

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Policymakers gain insights into the economic and social impacts of worker mobility across the EU, including effects on wages, fiscal budgets, and social systems for both sending and receiving regions.
- Actionable recommendations are provided to maximise the benefits of mobility while considering challenges such as demographic changes, regional effects and digitalisation.

RESEARCH GAPS

- Limited comparative analysis of intra-country mobility versus intra-EU labour mobility, particularly in terms of economic and social outcomes.
- Insufficient evidence on the role of different EU level instruments on shaping labour mobility and their long-term implications for public and corporate stakeholders.

POLICY CONTEXT

- European Pillar of Social Rights (Principle 6: fair working conditions; Principle 14: income and social security benefits).
- Strengthening the Internal Market
- Green and digital transitions necessitating enhanced labour mobility to address skill mismatches and demographic challenges.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS

Research area: Persons with disabilities: opportunities for labour inclusion and social protection through the life course

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Provide implementable quality evidence-based data to policy makers and research and innovation stakeholders to bridge the gap.
- Deliver scalable and replicable integrated person-centred interventions on disabilities, included blended ones, in a manner that they are transferable to the new contexts in labour, education, training and work, and studying and comparing their impacts.

RESEARCH GAPS

- Employment gap: 51% for persons with disabilities vs 75% for persons without disabilities.
- Labour inclusion of persons with disabilities: barriers, work capacity, benefits of employment at micro/macro level, role of AI, ageing, sheltered employment and open labour market, etc.
- Social protection of persons with disabilities through the life course: pensions, benefit trap, additional costs associated to disabilities, in-kind benefits (e.g. housing, health coverage, etc.).

POLICY CONTEXT

- Commissioner Lahbib's priorities for disabilities: employment, independent living, accessibility.
- Disability Employment Package (2024)
- Union of Equality: Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 – Point 9.2: *'The Commission will reinforce research on disability under Horizon Europe'*
- European Pillar of Social Rights – Principle 17: Inclusion of people with disabilities; Strong link to the political guidelines 2024-2029, in particular the EU anti-poverty strategy,
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities – Art. 27: Work and Employment

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS

Research area: Causes for declining basic skills of young people and effective remedial measures

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Policymakers understand the structural causes for the decline in young people's basic skill levels observed in the EU over the past decade;
- Policymakers know which teaching practices, programmes and policy actions are effective to reverse that decline, including the role of curricula, structural aspects of education and training systems, and physical and digital learning environments.

RESEARCH GAPS

- The causes of the observed decline in young people's basic skills in Europe are still poorly understood and more in-depth research is needed, using various data sources at national and international level
- More evidence on the causal impact of various remedial measures would be key to designing effective policies and programmes to improve young people's basic skills

POLICY CONTEXT

- Union of Skills ([Von der Leyen's Political Guidelines 2024-29](#))
- European Education Area
- STEM Education Strategic Plan ([Von der Leyen's Political Guidelines 2024-29](#))
- Action Plan on Basic Skills ([EVP Minzatu mission letter](#))
- EU Teachers Agenda ([EVP Minzatu mission letter](#))
- [Draghi Report](#)

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS

Research area: Improving social and socio-economic outcomes for people with dementia, informal caregivers and their support network

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- **Implement scalable and replicable social interventions** (include a wide range, like art, culture, assisted technology) **on dementia**
- Cross-sectorial (Socio-economic, Culture, Social, Health) collaboration with national, regional and local authorities and stakeholders will strengthen the care for people with dementia.
- **Reduce negative impact of dementia on general quality of life, mental health and social life of patients with dementia, informal carers and their support network.**

RESEARCH GAPS

- Societal need: number of people with dementia will double by 2050 in the European Union.
- Employment gap: 71% of the estimated time devoted to unpaid care for people with dementia by women.
- Need for focus on social aspects in addition to clinical aspects.
- There are wide discrepancies in Europe in the care for patients with dementia and a joint approach is needed.
- Economic impact: Europe has among the highest economic burden for dementia. The economic burden of informal care is estimated at **401.9 billion dollars** for 2016.
- Research gap: despite many innovative solutions (supported EU Framework Programmes for research and Innovation and/or international, national, regional, and local initiatives) for supporting dementia patients, their carers, and their support, **few implementation studies have been conducted on patients, carers and their support network.**

POLICY CONTEXT

- **Ursula von der Leyen**; https://commission.europa.eu/document/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en
- **Eketerina Zaharieva – Startups, Research and Innovation**: https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/833e082a-0c39-4bc6-a119-e0760ebc7360_en?filename=mission-letter-zaharieva.pdf
- [Documentary - Human Forever \(teuntoebes.com\)](https://www.teuntoebes.com/)

CHAPEAU AREA 3: DRIVERS OF CHANGE

- Long term impacts of demographic shifts
- Talent pool – Attracting students and researchers to the EU
- Strengthened implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum focusing on inclusion, integration, and health
- Scaling and deploying innovations in migration management
- Assessing the societal impact of Artificial Intelligence

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS

Research area: Long-term impacts of demographic shifts

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Provide policy makers and innovators with quality evidence-based data to bridge the gap of Long Term Care services that support individuals who are unable to perform basic daily activities independently because of old age, disability or chronic illnesses.
- Deliver scalable and replicable integrated person-centred interventions, including blended ones based on new technologies, in a manner that they are transferable to the new contexts in demography, labour, education, training and work, and studying and comparing their impacts at national and regional levels;
- Provide policy makers with data and projections on the contribution of legal and irregular migration to the labour shortages due to demographic change and its impact on the social security systems. Develop different policy options to determine the role migration can play in addressing demographic change (e.g. expanding legal pathways, regularization of illegally residing third country nationals, circular migration).

RESEARCH GAPS

- Understanding the impacts of changing demographics on Long Term Care, including workforce shortages, financial barriers and equitable access.
- Supporting the growing needs for and the expansion of the EU's increasing care demand
- Providing models to reduce the care gap, by acting both on the demand and supply of LTC services.
- Interplay between (irregular) migration with social security systems, public administrations and legal migration pathways.

POLICY CONTEXT

- National initiatives such as Germany's Western Balkans regulation and pilot projects for complementary labour pathways.
- Adequate social protection for long-term care needs in an ageing society (Report, 2024).
- Demographic projections of long-term care needs in the EU up to 2070 (Policy brief, 2024).
- Union of Skills ([Von der Leyen's Political Guidelines 2024-29](#))

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS

Research area: Talent pool – Attracting students and researchers to the EU

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Policymakers and higher education institutions obtain guidance on which policies and programmes can be effective in attracting talented students and researchers from extra-EU countries to EU higher education systems
- Policymakers and higher education institutions understand how to manage those processes to ensure a long-term positive impact on the EU economy's innovation and competitiveness

RESEARCH GAPS

- There is still limited research on what specific factors (e.g., academic quality, career opportunities, cultural appeal, or funding availability) most influence the decision-making process for international students and researchers when choosing destinations
- More evidence is needed how policies and programmes can be successful in retaining students and researchers from abroad into the EU in the medium-to-long term

POLICY CONTEXT

- Union of Skills ([Von der Leyen's Political Guidelines 2024-29](#))
- European Education Area
- [Draghi Report](#)

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS

Research area: Strengthened implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum focusing on inclusion, integration, and health

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- **Strengthened implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum** through evidence-based insights into its various aspects, including the proposed legal pathways, the asylum and migration management frameworks and procedures including the evaluation of existing age assessment methods of minors, and the resettlement framework, ensuring fair and efficient migration management that upholds human rights.
- **Addressing migration and health inequity** with recommendations for effective integration of data on migrants into national health information systems while respecting privacy, ethics and preventing discrimination against migrants and refugees; by enhancing resilience and inclusivity in healthcare delivery notably through the implementation of a universal healthcare coverage; by advancing and developing frameworks to analyse and address intersectional inequities in migrant health policies.
- **Evaluation of the long-term impact of social inclusion and integration strategies** at the EU and national levels, focusing on areas such as **labour market access**, **housing**, promotion of **youth participation**, the degree of social, political, and cultural **inclusion** of migrants and refugee communities, and exploring the relationship between migratory movements and the construction of social identities.

RESEARCH GAPS

- The Pact of Migration and Asylum has introduced several novelties that need to be supported with evidence such as the solidarity mechanism, the framework for age assessment of minors the crisis and force majeure migration management, and the Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Framework
- Fragmented, incomplete, and low-quality health data on migrants and refugees. Political, governance, and structural barriers hinder data integration and usage.
- Lack of research addressing how intersecting factors like age, gender, age and legal status affect health outcomes.

POLICY CONTEXT

- The [legislative files](#) of the Pact on Migration and Asylum
- [Action plan](#) on integration and inclusion
- UN SDGs 2030 agenda
- WHO global research agenda on migration and displacement

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS

Research area: Scaling and deploying innovations in migration management

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- **Maximized impact of previous EU-funded research and innovation projects:** By leveraging findings, tools, and methodologies from prior EU migration-related projects, this topic aims to upscale and **deploy solutions closer to implementation**, ensuring their integration into policies and operational frameworks at the EU, national and local level.
- **A policy innovation ecosystem:** Foster collaboration between researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to adapt, scale, and deploy validated models, ensuring their scalability, sustainability, and practical application in diverse EU, national and local contexts.

RESEARCH GAPS

- **Limited continuity between projects:** Many migration-related research projects have delivered valuable outputs, but their findings are often not **deployed** or adapted into actionable solutions.
- **Challenges in scaling and adapting practices:** Previous innovations may not yet have been **prepared for real-world application**, particularly in diverse socio-political and economic contexts within the EU.

POLICY CONTEXT

- EU Pact on Asylum and Migration
- Previous EU funded migration related research and innovation [projects](#)

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS

Research area: Assessing the societal impact of Artificial Intelligence

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Investigate how AI technologies affect **power dynamics, wealth distribution, and societal inequalities**, providing a nuanced understanding of their role in either mitigating or exacerbating existing disparities.
- Examine the ethical considerations surrounding **AI's use in health-related data analysis**, focusing on issues such as data privacy, consent, and potential biases, to ensure responsible application in healthcare contexts.
- Policy recommendations for **ethical AI deployment**: Develop guidelines and strategies to promote the responsible and equitable deployment of AI, aligning with the EU's vision of becoming a world leader in trustworthy AI.

RESEARCH GAPS

- Limited research in the interplay between AI and power dynamics, wealth distribution and societal inequalities
- Lack of comprehensive ethical frameworks
- Ethical challenges in AI-Driven health applications

POLICY CONTEXT

- [Artificial Intelligence Act](#)
- EU's [Political Guidelines](#) for 2024-2029