



1. ImPRovE is a European research project...

ImPRovE stands for 'Poverty Reduction in Europe: Social Policy and Innovation'. ImPRovE is a research project that is financially supported by the European Commission. It is coordinated by the Herman Deleeck Centre for Social Policy (University of Antwerp) and brings together ten outstanding research institutes in a concerted effort to study poverty, social policy and social innovation in Europe.

The **two central questions** driving the ImPRovE project are:

1. How can social cohesion be achieved in Europe?
2. How can social innovation complement, reinforce and modify macro-level policies and vice versa?



ImPRovE takes as its starting points:

- the long standstill in poverty reduction, especially for people of working age;
- the complementarity between employment, economic growth and social inclusion that is focal in the EU 2020 strategy and;
- the emergence of socially innovative policies and actions in the margins of the European welfare states.

The main goal of ImPRovE is to contribute to evidence-based policymaking in the area of poverty, social policy and social innovation in Europe. More specifically, ImPRovE will **evaluate the Lisbon decade** and the impact of the **economic crisis and austerity measures** on poverty and inequality in Europe. At the same time, it aims at improving the understanding of the interrelationships between **employment, social protection and social inclusion**. In addition, the links between institutionalised macro level social policies and local initiatives of **social innovation** will be scrutinised. ImPRovE will also look at the future, by developing and evaluating several policy scenarios that contribute to meeting the **Europe 2020 social inclusion target**. Furthermore, ImPRovE will contribute to indicator development in the area of **minimum income protection** and the measurement of poverty. The project will also address specific European issues and concerns such as **gender** and the situation of **Roma** and young people.

2. ...that builds on state-of-the-art methodologies

ImPRovE will make use of state-of-the-art tools for the analysis of the social situation in the European Union and policy evaluation. Among others, it will perform an in-depth analysis of **large-scale surveys** such as the European Community and Household Panel (ECHP), the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) and the EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS).

In addition, ImPRovE will make extensive use of the European **micro-simulation model EUROMOD** that enables researchers and policy analysts to calculate, in a comparable manner, the effects of taxes and benefits on household incomes and work incentives for the population of each country and for the EU as a whole.

3. ImPRovE has a strong policy focus...

Building on state-of-the-art research tools and methodologies, ImPRovE will:

- evaluate the effectiveness of **tax-benefit systems** in reducing poverty and inequality in the past,
- scrutinize the effect of the **crisis and austerity** measures on poverty and income inequality
- assess the effectiveness and efficiency of **targeted vs universal** (child) benefits
- identify policy designs of **childcare provisions** with the most beneficial effects in terms of income inequality, female employment decisions and poverty
- map the adequacy of **minimum income protection** schemes in Europe
- develop and evaluate several **budget-neutral policy scenarios** that contribute to meeting the EU 2020 social inclusion target under different scenarios of employment growth.
- carry out topical analyses of **vulnerable groups**: migrants, Roma, young people, non-standard workers, the poor and deprived

In addition, 30 case-studies of local initiatives of social innovation will complement the quantitative analyses. ImPRovE will identify **best practices of social innovation** and investigate how social innovation and macro level social policies can mutually reinforce one another. Finally, ImPRovE will examine how the Europe 2020 strategy, the EU social agenda and cohesion policy can be brought closer together at EU, national and sub-national levels.

4. ... and will develop new methodologies and tools.

In particular ImPRovE will develop a methodology for constructing cross-nationally comparable **reference budgets** and apply this methodology to construct reference budgets for six European countries (Belgium, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Italy and Spain).

Furthermore, ImPRovE will extend the available policy scenarios in **EUROMOD** and add new features in the area of services, improve the CSB Minimum Income Protection Indicators database (**CSB-MIPI**), and develop a methodological framework for evaluating the **effectiveness of local initiatives of social innovation**.

5. A strong team and excellent international network

ImPRovE aims to integrate the best of applied policy research and fundamental scientific research. For doing so, it can rely on a strong team of leading European research institutes.

	Herman Deleeck Centre for Social Policy (CSB) – University of Antwerp, Belgium
	Centre on Inequalities, Poverty and Social Exclusion and the City (OASes) – University of Antwerp, Belgium
	Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) – University of Essex, United Kingdom
	TÁRKI Social Research Institute (TÁRKI), Hungary
	Università degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo (UNIURB), Italy
	Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE) - London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom
	Policy Analysis Research Unit – Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB), Greece
	Institute for the Environment and Regional Development (RUW) – Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien, Austria
	Department of Social Policy – University of Turku, Finland
	Research Group of Social Pedagogy and Information and Communication Technologies (PSITIC), Blanquerna Universitat Ramon Llull, Spain (voluntary partner for developing reference budgets)

ImPRovE can rely on a **Scientific Advisory Board** and a **CSO & Policy Advisory Board**, which consist of leading personalities in the field of social policy and social innovation. Among others, the following persons are member of ImPRovE's advisory boards: Tony Atkinson, Richard Berthoud, Andrea Brandolini, Michael Förster, Duncan Gallie, Tassos Giannitsis, Sian Jones, Juan-Luis Klein, David Natali, Philippe Pochet, Jo Ritzen, Chiara Saraceno, Freek Spinnewijn, Robert Urbé, Frank Vandenbroucke, Jiří Večerník, Benedikt Vulsteke.

In addition, the ImPRovE project is embedded in a broad international network of **associated experts** who will write contributed papers for ImPRovE: Jean-Claude Barbier, Jonathan Bradshaw, Conchita D'Ambrosio, Joost De Laat, Daniela Del Boca, Jaap Dronkers, Markus Grabka, Anne-Catherine Guio, Irena Kogan, Kathleen Lynch, Eric Marlier, Ides Nicaise, Wiemer Salverda, Lane Kenworthy, Frank Moulaert, Brian Nolan, Geranda Notten, Joakim Palme, Ramón Peña-Casas, Bart Vanhercke, Wim Van Oorschot, Sarah Voitchovsky, Terry Ward.

More information

ImPRovE has an effective communication strategy to ensure that the project results are widely disseminated and actively contribute to poverty reduction, policy making and the development of successful projects of social innovation across Europe.

For more information, visit us at <http://improve-research.eu> and register for receiving our newsletter.



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Combating poverty in Europe: a key question of human dignity and social cohesion

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