

ImPRovE

Poverty Reduction in Europe: Social policy and innovation



Overview of the ImPRovE project

Advisory Board Meeting

08-04-2014

University of Antwerp

- The ImPRovE Consortium
- Project overview
- Expected output
- Realisations so far

Partners

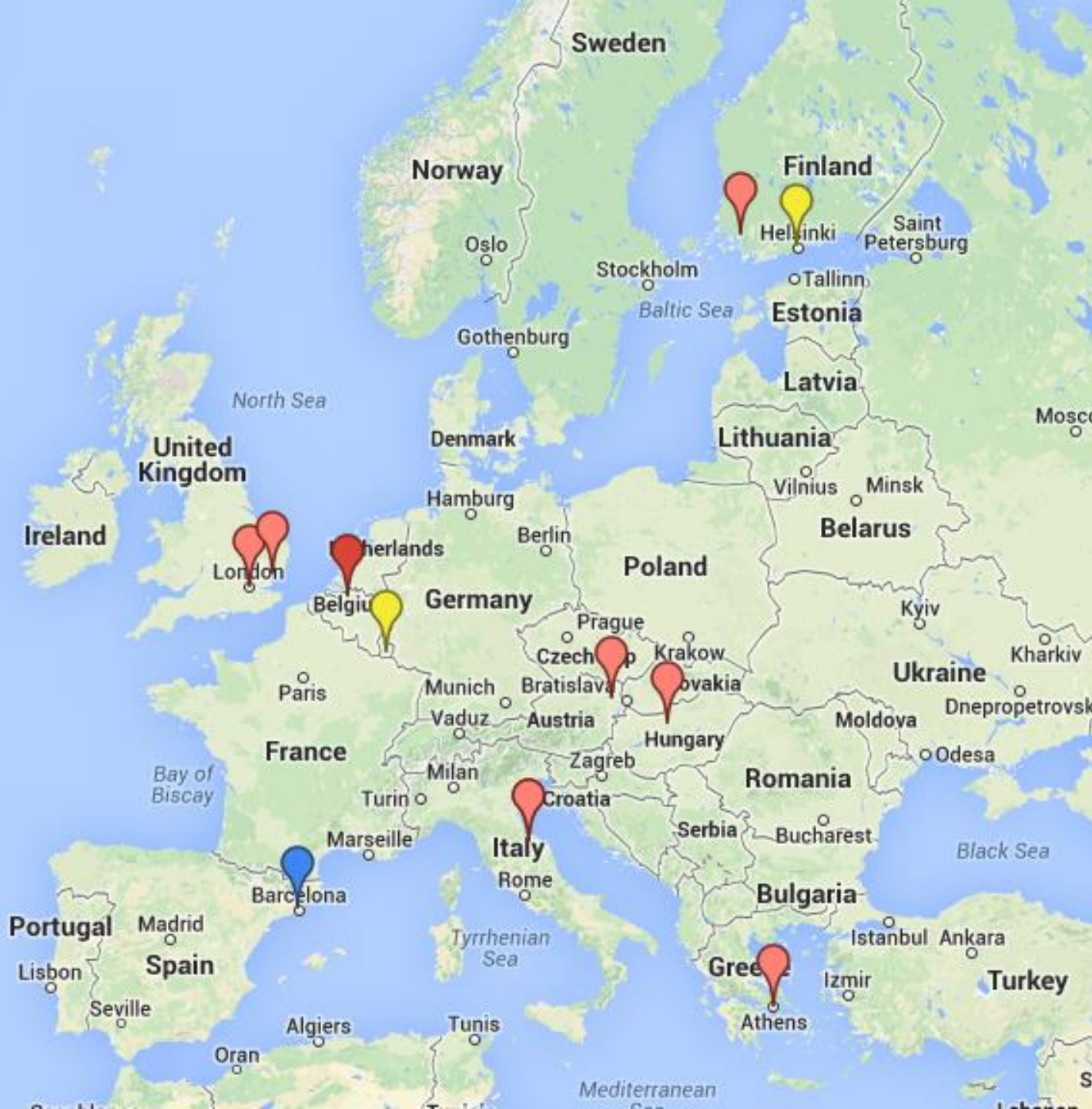
University of Antwerp is coordinator (red)

7 other partners, in six countries (orange)

1 voluntary partner, in Spain (blue)

2 liaised partners, in LU and FI (yellow)

Advisory board & 22 associated experts





Partners

Originally 9, now 12 research groups, including two official institutions (STATEC and THL)

60 researchers directly involved, close to 100 in total

Most financing from the European Commission

Important shares of other funding sources



Goals of ImPRovE (March 2012- February 2016):

Improve the basis for evidence-based policy making in Europe, both in the short and in the long term:

- Research directly relevant for policy makers
- Dialogue with policy makers & civil society (seminars, workshops, meetings and conferences)

But not ‘policy-based evidence making’:

- Own research agenda
- Upgrading the available research infrastructure
- Combining both applied and fundamental research

The two central questions driving the ImPRovE project are:

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

The main research objectives of ImPRovE are:

- To evaluate the Lisbon decade in terms of policies and actions against poverty at European, national and sub-national level;
- To improve the understanding of the interrelationships between employment, social protection and social inclusion and between institutionalised macro level social policies and innovative local actions;
- To improve the EU measurement tools by strengthening the EU 2020 poverty reduction indicators;
- To assess alternative scenarios to meet the 2020 poverty targets.

Project overview

Streams

A. Retrospective

B. Improving Policies

C. Improving Indicators

D. Improving Conditions

Macro social policies

WP 1-3

WP 5-10

WP 12-13

WP 15

Local social innovation

WP 4

WP 11

WP 14

WP 16

18 Work packages in total

16 content-related

1 project management

1 dissemination

WP14 completed

WP15 and WP16 start now



Expected output

- over 55 research papers
- about 16 policy briefs
- at least 3 scientific books
- Three (instead of two) international conferences (November 2013, March 2014 and December 2015) + other dissemination activities (e.g. on Roma in November 2014)
- new database of local projects of social innovation in Europe
- cross-national comparable reference budgets for 6 countries (Belgium, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Italy and Spain; +LU)
- will strongly expand the available policy scenarios in the European microsimulation model EUROMOD

Main research findings relating to poverty and social exclusion:

- the new Member States were successful in closing the **virtuous circle** of decreasing at-risk-of-poverty, increasing employment and keeping social spending down, but poorest & most vulnerable worst hit by the crisis
- while national poverty stagnated during 2005-2009, **EU-wide poverty** substantially decreased in the same period, the reverse is true for EU-SILC 2009-2011
- positive cross-national correlation between the level of **low work intensity** and the number of people living in a household with a persistently low work intensity

Main findings in relation to policies (except WP2 & WP3):

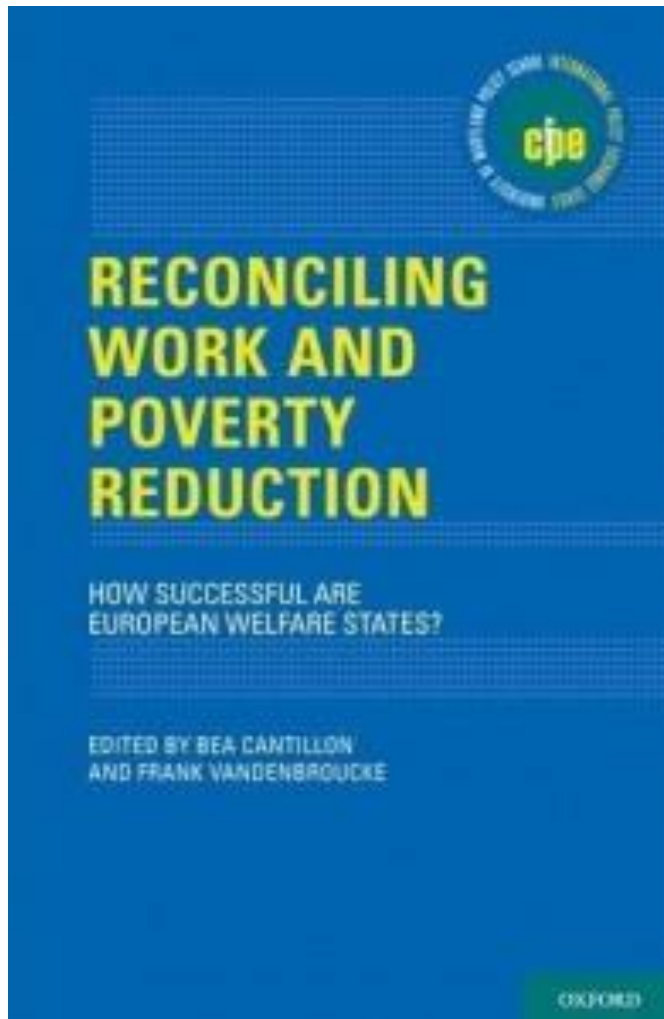
- There was a marked increase in the spread of **minimum income schemes** in the period 1992/2001-2012, the cross-country variation in the level of minimum income benefits has remained markedly stable
- programmes emerge as much more successful when looking at whether they reach those who are **'consistently' poor**, a potentially more robust measure
- the regulatory drivers shaping **part-time work** and the welfare state arrangements supporting part-time work play key roles in accounting for the wide variation in poverty risks associated with part-time work across the EU15.

Methodological realisations (except WP2 & WP3):

- a theoretical and methodological framework for developing cross-country comparable **reference budgets** in Europe & used this framework for six countries
- have developed a theoretical approach and methodological basis to study **social innovation** with a trans-disciplinary, mixed and comparative method

- The ImPRovE Consortium has attracted substantial interest in the research community and by policy makers (notoriously the EC) -> 3 additional partners + SIP
- An extra international conference in the European Parliament in November 2014 as well as contribution to Inclusive Europe Conference (Berlin, October 2014) -> collaboration with related projects
- 17 research papers so far
- 1 policy brief, others will be launched soon
- First wave social innovation cases collected
- ImPRovE feeds directly into project on reference budgets financed by DG EMPL

Realised output



Other book projects:

- Social policy paradigms
- Social innovation
- Reference budgets
- ...