

Review of minimum income schemes in Spain from the perspective of their effectiveness

*Programme for Employment and Social Innovation of the EU
(PROGRESS)*

Call for proposals VP/2014/006: Support for social protection reforms

Challenges and next steps for the improvement of the Minimum Income System in Spain



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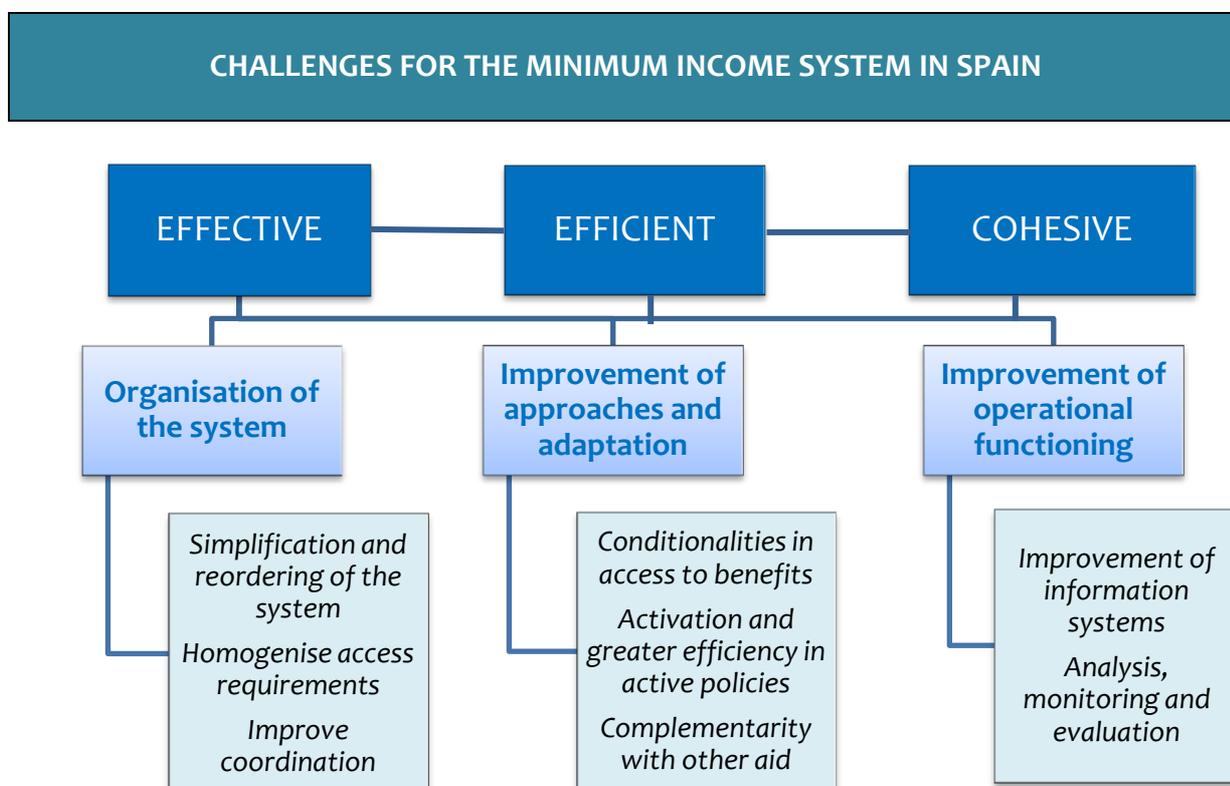
1. CHALLENGES FOR SPAIN

The minimum income system in Spain in recent times has faced an unprecedented situation as a result of the severe and long economic crisis, playing a key role. As the last line of defence of economic security in the fight against poverty, the deployment of this system has served to cushion the consequences that a lack of income has on people.

But precisely, at this critical moment, with the increase of people receiving and the extension of the situations of absence of income and employment have shown that it is a complex system, evidencing aspects that must be improved. Thus, the diversity of administrative levels involved, the complex articulation between benefits, the effectiveness in the activation of the beneficiaries for their incorporation into the labour market, some gaps in the system and territorial diversity are elements to be taken into account. This model, designed to protect some groups more for reasons of age, family responsibilities and/or life events, also has certain regulatory exclusions and procedural barriers in the application of the rule that show the need to improve the cohesion of the system.

The main challenge is to achieve a minimum income system that is:

- ▶ **Effective:** responds to the needs of the people.
- ▶ **Efficient:** with the best possible management of available resources.
- ▶ **Cohesive:** the result of an integral approach.



ORGANISATION OF THE SYSTEM

As previously indicated, Spain's Minimum Income System is characterised by high complexity. The map described reflects the **multitude of existing benefits**, with different access requirements, conditions, amounts, duration and coverage, as well as the level of intensity in activation towards employment; all in response to the different profiles of people served by the system. A **competency structure** is added to them at various **territorial levels** that have the capacity to regulate, design, finance and manage. Within the Central Administration, there are benefits that are managed by different ministerial departments.

The multitude of services and agents, the different requirements, etc. draw a framework in which there is a risk of **losing efficiency** and which, in terms of **coverage**, can generate **imbalance**. Although the nature of each of the services is diverse, it is advisable to **rationalise and simplify the system**, in addition to trying to **standardise administrative procedures and access requirements**. It is advisable to advance an agreement on what the access requirements should be, agree on a definition of home and family responsibilities, recognise new forms of partnership, agree on a certain balance on the income threshold for proof of income, among other aspects.

The process of simplification and reordering implies closer **coordination** within the **General State Administration**, as well as with the **Autonomous Communities**, within the framework of powers attributed by the Constitution. Although it is difficult to determine the best way to improve the articulation of the set of benefits, the results show the need to design a **more coherent system among the different levels of government**. In this sense it is possible to improve the **operational coordination** between administrations within the framework of the institutions and channels enabled for this purpose.

In line with the foregoing, although the attempt to preserve certain differentiation in the nature of the benefits is reasonable, given that the protection objectives and instruments vary in the different population categories, a **greater articulation of the set of actions** seems necessary to avoid making the inequalities between groups too great. A better delimitation of the needs of each group, a greater structuring of the contributory and assistance subsystems and the improvement of the internal coherence of each subsystem is inevitable.

IMPROVEMENT OF APPROACHES AND ADAPTATION

With regard to the approach of the minimum income system itself, future challenges are associated, on the one hand, with the issue of conditionalities and, on the other hand, with the activation of employment policies and the effectiveness of active employment policies in the region, the search for a balance between protection due to lack of economic resources and the need to articulate active employment policies aimed at job placement.

The three aspects raised are closely inter-related and show the importance that, in this context, is attributed to employment as an integrating mechanism. When dealing with the issue of **conditionalities**, Spain cannot ignore the European tendency to **increase** the conditions for people to receive benefits. These requirements, which in many benefits are already in force, range from the acceptance of a job to the obligation to carry out training, among other aspects. This is

required for certain SEPE benefits. The same pattern and requirements do not exist in all the Autonomous Communities, so consensus is recommended on a set of **common criteria**.

On the other hand, and even recognising the remarkable advance and effort invested in the last twenty years in the area of active policies in the development of **activation strategies** for the unemployed, it is necessary to point out the need to continue with this orientation, putting more emphasis on improving the **effectiveness of active employment policies** aimed at the most vulnerable profiles. Deepening the **complementarity of active and passive** policies and the synchronisation of measures constitute a challenge to improve the effect of labour market policies on the job prospects of people and aggregate employment indicators. This is crucial for those who are at the extremes of their careers (young and over 45) and for the most vulnerable groups (unemployed people with low levels of education and long-term unemployed).

The fact of a reduction in the probability of leaving the programme over time obliges us to review which types of strategies contribute the most to improving the autonomy of the beneficiaries.

The commitment to **improve coordination and collaboration between social services and public employment services in response to the need to match active and passive policies** is also related to the activation for employment and the effectiveness of active policies. Currently most of the incentives for hiring or job training in public employment services are aimed at people with active employment or the unemployed. This model does not design programmes that are suitable for people with profiles that are further away from the labour market until they reach the last level of social protection through minimum income and social services.

It is necessary, therefore, to lay the foundations of a **more articulated system**, with a better coordination between active and passive policies that can materialise in better adaptation of active policies and coordination between employment systems and social services.

Lastly, it is necessary to allude to the question of the **complementarity of these policies with other types of aid and measures**. Specifically, the European experiences show the gain in efficiency of the model when the minimum income system is complemented with other kinds of aid and policies. This challenge implies, on the one hand, strengthening the system with other policies: housing, education, family, social services, food aid, etc., but also articulating support measures for employment, especially in the framework of integrated itineraries of insertion. Such is the case of transport aid, conciliation, etc., as well as those with family responsibilities.

IMPROVEMENT OF OPERATIONAL FUNCTIONING

Improving the efficiency of the minimum income system implies a more rational use of existing resources, especially in relation to **knowledge management**. In the current technological context, knowledge management has become an essential factor in the **improvement of processes, in decision-making and strategies, and in the management of the Administration**. The improvement in the operational functioning of the minimum income system necessarily involves advancing the improvement and coordination of current information systems, not only that which remains in data storage but also to improve its use in order to guide the policies themselves, allowing analysis, monitoring and evaluation.

This is undoubtedly a great challenge because the information to a large extent is a reflection of a complex system with multiple features and actors where there are, in turn, different information systems, platforms, databases that are not shared, or they flow between the different entities and organisms and decrease the integrity of the model and the answers that the systems were designed to give.

In this sense, for a correct evaluation of the benefits that shape the income guarantee system, it is convenient to monitor its dynamics through more complete information systems. The implementation of reforms must also be accompanied by the improvement of the databases of administrative records. Although the advances in this area are undoubted and the results of this project have been possible thanks to the effort and coordination of the institutions providing data, new steps are still necessary to have access to records that allow a more robust evaluation of the reality.

2. NEXT STEPS

The analysis of the reality of the minimum income system in Spain, the lessons from other experiences, the debate and the reflection together with the will to face the future challenges that arise, bring with it the idea of a set of action lines that will guide the steps to achieve a more effective, efficient and cohesive minimum income scheme.

These lines of action are presented in coherence with the challenges posed previously and mark the way forward in the coming times. The approach of these steps to be undertaken rests on the criterion not only of the opportunity but of the viability to carry them out.

The action lines that derive from the development of this project are structured in the three pillars that mark the defined challenges and are as follows:

1. ORGANISATION OF THE SYSTEM

1.1. KNOW TO REORGANISE

- Strengthen information systems in such a way that the three levels of Public Administration (General State Administration, Autonomous Communities and Local Corporations) have data on all benefits and services received, and can assess and **detect possible gaps or duplications**.

1.2. ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

- Carry out a review of the current model of social benefits, in order to **homogenise the access requirements** in the framework of the competencies of each administration, in order to provide integrated coverage in each situation of need.

2. IMPROVEMENT OF APPROACHES AND ADAPTATION

2.1. CONDITIONS

- Advance in **common criteria, on the conditionalities** that, when appropriate, have to be required of the recipients of benefits, in accordance with to different personal circumstances, as well as the additional support recommended.

2.2. COORDINATION BETWEEN EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SERVICES

- Improve **coordination between employment services and social services**, in order to strengthen the processes of labour insertion of vulnerable people.

2.3. EFFECTIVENESS OF ACTIVE POLICIES

- Increase the effectiveness of spending on active employment policies, by the competent public administrations, especially with the minimum income earners who have the capacity to work (itineraries, support for insertion, coordination between social and employment services, etc.) to achieve their incorporation into the labour market.

2.4. COMPLEMENTARITY

- Improve the **coordination and complementarity between monetary benefits** of a non-contributory nature that make up the minimum income system and other **economic and material aid** that are provided both from social services and from other areas.

2.5. FAMILY PROTECTION POLICIES

- Advance in the **protection** regime for **families**, especially those with dependent children, in order to achieve greater reduction of poverty, especially child poverty.

3. IMPROVEMENT OF OPERATIONAL FUNCTIONING

3.1. INFORMATION SYSTEMS, UNIVERSAL SOCIAL CARD (USC)

IMPLEMENT THE UNIVERSAL SOCIAL CARD AS THE BACKBONE OF THE INFORMATION SYSTEM OF SOCIAL PROTECTION IN SPAIN IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE COORDINATION OF SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICIES WHOSE POWERS FALL ON DIFFERENT LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

3. TASKS, RESPONSABILITIES AND ACTORS

As a result of the Progress project, and especially the analysis carried out by different experts (Alcalá de Henares University, Rey Juan Carlos University, Public University of Navarra, etc.), a thorough diagnosis of the real situation has been performed of the minimum income system in Spain. This diagnosis has revealed weaknesses and shortcomings that must be corrected gradually, while complying with the recommendations of the European Commission in relation to the fragmentation of benefits and the lack of coordination between the responsible Public Administrations.

The Steering Committee of the Progress project, which includes, among other agents, the main ministries and state entities with social protection competencies, has known this diagnosis first hand and has designed a road map with new measures and/or improvements of the existing measures, which are detailed, one by one, on the following pages.

Among the many measures planned or already implemented on this road map, it is worth mentioning the creation of a Universal Social Card, the reordering of state unemployment benefits, the evaluation of a possible universal minimum income provision in the field of Social Security, the improvements established in the State Budget Law of 2018, the creation of a High Commissioner for the Fight against Child Poverty, and lastly, greater coordination of information systems such as the SISPE (Information System for Public Employment Services) and SIUSS (Information System of Users of Social Services).

1. ORGANISATION OF THE SYSTEM

1.1 Know to reorganise: SISPE, SIUSS, Registry of Benefits: Universal Social Card

1.1.a Information System of Public Employment Services (SISPE)

Royal Legislative Decree 3/2015, of 23 October, which approves the revised text of the Employment Law, assigns to the National Employment System, among others, the function of guaranteeing the coordination and cooperation of the Public State Employment Service (SEPE) and the Public Employment Services of the Autonomous Communities, paying special attention to the coordination between active employment policies and unemployment benefits. To this end, article 9 of the said Law establishes as one of the instruments of the National Employment **the Information System of Public Employment Services (SISPE)**.

This information system has been analysed in the studies of the Progress project in order to evaluate its effectiveness and the possibilities for improvement, as well as in its Steering Committee, of which SEPE itself is a part.

Prior to the transfer of competences to the Autonomous Communities, the Information System of the National Employment Institute allowed, on its own, to respond to the information and management needs that were required at the national level, integrating the different management domains: labour intermediation, employment contracts, unemployment benefits and occupational training.

After the transfers, the possibility was left open for the Autonomous Communities to develop their own Information Systems, in isolation, to carry out the management that was transferred to them; that is, without sharing information with the rest of Autonomous Communities and with difficulty of supplying data to the Central Administration. Some Autonomous Communities chose to develop their own Information Systems (Catalonia, Andalusia, Valencia, Galicia, Castilla y León and the Canary Islands), while others opted to continue using the SEPE system. This situation evidenced the need, from the moment in which several Information Systems were implemented, to integrate the systems and share a basic nucleus of information related to the management of active employment policies in real time, that is to say, that information could be known by the different systems at the time it was produced.

The improvement objectives of the system are aimed at integrating information related to the management of active employment policies and unemployment benefits carried out by the Public, State and Autonomous Community Employment Services. Currently, professionals on the national level that manage unemployment benefits and subsidies as well as those from the autonomous community sector that offer and manage active employment policies, are connected in a way that facilitates and improves the coordination of actions and strategies oriented to favour the labour insertion of recipients of unemployment benefits.

On the other hand, regulatory changes in management are focusing on the following objectives:

- ▶ Guarantee equal treatment, in terms of rights and obligations, to users of the Public Employment Services - job seekers and employers - regardless of the territory where services are provided, through the establishment of common minimum rules for management procedures of said services.
- ▶ Respect territorial diversity and preserve the management autonomy of the different Public Employment Services, allowing that, based on the minimum management rules mentioned above, each of them can adapt its operation to the needs of its own territory.
- ▶ Make labour intermediation possible throughout the national territory, facilitating geographical mobility by: Knowledge by job seekers, regardless of where they reside, of the 6 job opportunities - vacancies - throughout the Country. Employers' knowledge of the possibilities of filling vacancies with available job seekers residing anywhere in the Country.
- ▶ Coordinate management and enable collaboration between the various Public Employment Services, in terms of active employment policies and unemployment benefits, in order to meet the objectives defined in the European Employment Strategy, to facilitate the control and justification of EU funds and thus fulfil one of the recommendations that the European Commission has been insisting of Spain.
- ▶ Allow the production of reliable statistics on the magnitudes that define the functioning of the labour market, thus providing the National Employment System with a global view of the evolution of employment and thus enabling the development of basic policy proposals on active policies of employment and unemployment protection.

The improvements to be introduced in SISPE are the result of the agreements adopted by its Steering Committee, and are developed according to the needs that are detected. In any case, the improvements introduced cannot ignore the fulfilment of its founding objectives.

Taking into account the above, management procedures have been implemented that allow accreditation of active job search to job seekers for their access to certain subsidies. These actions, regulated and harmonised within SISPE, are identical in all the Public Employment Services, thus allowing the principles of equal treatment and non-discrimination of the beneficiaries to be implemented within the framework of the National Employment System regardless of the territory of the Country in which they reside. Lastly, this accreditation of the active search for employment by unemployed people is unified through the different options that are granted to the person to demonstrate the performance of actions aimed at their re-employment or to improve their employability.

RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATION:

- ▶ Public State Employment Service (SEPE)
- ▶ Public Employment Services of the Autonomous Communities

ACTIVITY MONITORING SYSTEM:

- ▶ The monitoring of this action is carried out through a constant review by the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Social Security and the Autonomous Communities to achieve compliance with the objectives of SISPE according to the agreements adopted by the Steering Committee.

1.1.b Social Service User Information System (SIUSS)

The Social Service User Information System (SIUSS) is the online computer application that allows collecting the basic data of the users of **the Primary Care Social Services**. This computer application has been developed by the Ministry of Health, Consumption and Social Welfare (MSCBS) with the collaboration of the Autonomous Communities. After the implementation of the online application in 2013, the access of the professionals requires the prior signing of an Agreement. These collaboration agreements are signed between the Ministry and the Autonomous Communities and Cities with Statute of Autonomy (Ceuta and Melilla).

In SIUSS, professional performance, understood as **social intervention**, reflects the set of planned actions that are developed through a process of interactions between the professional and the user, in order to prevent, or, if necessary, alleviate, remedy or resolve, situations or needs that at a given time that the recipients cannot face on their own.

SIUSS at the management level, in the case of users in a situation of lack of means to cover their basic needs, aims to improve **coordination and complementarity in the resources** they receive. This mainly affects the monetary benefits of a non-contributory nature that make up the minimum income system and other economic and material aid that is provided both from social services and from other areas, such as, for example, from social entities.

In order to avoid the user having to present documentation that is already in the hands of the public administration, work has been done to implement the access from SIUSS to the Verification and Data Consultation services, available on the intermediation platform, Electronic Administration Portal, for which the Ministry of Territorial Policy and Public Function is responsible and recipients of which are any public administration. Currently, the identity consultation, consultation of the disability and consultation of the degree of dependency is implemented in SIUSS.

On the other hand, the Autonomous Communities are working on the creation of the unique social history, the purpose of which is to structure and regulate social services. This affects the application of SIUSS and its interoperability with other systems.

The single social history will integrate the set of services, programmes and benefits in which different administrations and entities participate into the social services system and will maintain a basic information system for users of social services.

In the study carried out under the Progress Project "Analysis of support services for people with lack of means to cover basic needs from the database of the Social Services Users Information System (SIUSS)" has detected that the criteria for registering the valuations and resources used in SIUSS are very diverse among communities, municipalities and even among professionals. While in some cases SIUSS is used as a regular record of the direct work of local social services professionals, in others, other information systems are used and only a few interventions are recorded in SIUSS.

In the analysis carried out in this study on the minimum income report and the minimum income data collected in SIUSS show that in some Autonomous Communities the number of family records with minimum income approximated the number of receiving households, while in other income minimums registered by SIUSS are much less than those officially granted. This happens because, in many cases, the formal registration of the application, processing and administrative management of the minimum income is made in a specific application other than SIUSS.

In addition, work is carried out on access levels, so that public employment services can access as users of the application in those variables of social intervention in accordance with the information exchange needs detected by professionals.

RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATION:

- ▶ Ministry of Health, Consumption and Social Welfare.
- ▶ Autonomous Communities

ACTIVITY MONITORING SYSTEM:

- ▶ The monitoring of the actions is carried out by the Working Group established with the Autonomous Communities, with the aim of increasing the efficiency of social care of the needs of families.
- ▶ This group meets at least once a year and when requested by its members. In 2017, a meeting was held with the Autonomous Communities in November and the next meeting of the working group is planned for the end of 2018.

- ▶ In addition to the monitoring committees of these information systems: SISPE and SIUSS, and in order to explore the connection routes between the two, in the Social Inclusion Network (which will be explained in more detail later) one of the working groups is dedicated to evaluating and proposing improvements in the Exchange of Information between Social and Employment Services.

1.1.c. Registration of Benefits: Universal Social Card

The Universal Social Card is the result of an agreement adopted at the Conference of Presidents, and the development and execution were assumed by the current Ministry of Labour, Migration and Social Security. In said Conference, the commitment to form a working group formed by the National Government, Autonomous Communities and FEMP was assumed for the design and promotion of the Social ID Card.

The Universal Social Card is a system of information and services in the field of social protection in Spain, which aims to replace the Registry of Public Social Benefits (RPSP), whose possibilities for improvement have been widely analysed in the Progress Project. Consequently, the Universal Social Card, in its Information System aspect, goes much further than the RPSP as refers to the type of benefits it will cover. Unlike the RPSP, which was born primarily for the agile and effective management of pensions, although it has subsequently been extended to income from social integration and dependency, the Universal Social Card will integrate all public financial benefits, whether basic pensions or complementary; contributory, non-contributory and welfare; temporary benefits such as Temporary Disability subsidies; maternity; paternity, Risk during pregnancy and lactation; single payment benefits and aid, in short, any social benefit or financial aid aimed at individuals or families.

After 20 years of service, the RPSP gives way to the Universal Social Card as an Information and Services System in the field of social protection in Spain, with a much more ambitious projection while the information to be integrated extends to all financial and social benefits that citizens receive in addition to the subjective profile of their owners and other information that is of interest to build, analyse and improve the map of social protection and because it will be developed with much more advanced technological support than the simple basis of relational data that supports the RPSP.

Bearing in mind that this information system is intended to include any provision or assistance of financial content addressed to an individual, financed with public resources and framed in social protection plans or programmes, certain parameters have been determined to establish the exclusion criteria for the services that should not be included in the USC because they do not meet the purpose of this new information system. They are as follows:

- ▶ Subsidies paid in kind or indirectly or which consist of a reduction of public prices.
- ▶ Subsidies.
- ▶ That break special protection for a situation of risk (terrorism/violence against women)
- ▶ That are directed to the reimbursement of medical expenses or to obtaining of prosthesis or health treatments.
- ▶ That do not participate or do not have a social protection component.

Therefore, subsidies would initially be excluded from the Social Universal Card; the social benefits of chapter I (social action of the organisations directed to officials); the reimbursements of medical expenses and aid directed to health treatments as well as the benefits paid in kind.

Consequently, it is very likely that the benefits figure currently handled by RPSP (12 million) will double. Likewise, the number of catalogued entities (110) will be increased fundamentally by the local administration entities that are added.

The project also includes what have been called subjective situations that help shape people in terms of vulnerability. Thus, these subjective situations attend to aspects such as the level of income; belonging to a large family; grade of disability; degree of dependency; youth guarantee; unemployment or demand for employment.

From an institutional point of view, the Universal Social Card project reaches not only the General State Administration (AGE) and the Autonomous Communities but also the Local Administration to the extent that their proximity to the citizen leads them to manage social aid from very different nature and purpose, which must necessarily be reflected in the project so that it fulfils the intended role.

The Universal Social Card will fulfil three basic functions in its first stage of existence:

- ▶ In the first place, for the citizens themselves, it must be a fully transparent and accessible information system, so that each person has permanent information about the benefits and aids that he or she receives, which will contribute decisively to achieving greater awareness of the Welfare State and the benefits that derive from it for all citizens.

Currently, in addition to the more than 6.1 million requests for data received from other public administrations through the IFIWEB services, the INSS continues to bear a heavy burden in meeting the demand for certifications (more than 1.1 million in 2017).

Therefore; The Universal Social Card will offer citizens a simple and safe access that allows them to download all the information that is in the system referred to each person, either in a report format or in a certified format, with all the security guarantees; confidentiality and authentication.

- ▶ With the Public Administrations and Organisms in their double condition of information providers and users of the system, the Universal Social Card must offer a complete vision of the social protection that each citizen receives. In this sense, the management and control of benefits and financial aid will be more agile and secure insofar as the managing body has at its disposal permanently updated information on benefits and aid received by the applicant for a benefit.

Currently, the Registry of Public Social Benefits fulfils the function of offering information on pensions and other benefits for the purpose of applying maximum limits of public pension and/or controlling the suppositions of compatibility/incompatibility between benefits.

The Universal Social Card System will offer an additional information to the extent that by incorporating all levels of social protection, from the highest to the minimum subsistence income, it can become a very effective tool in the fight against poverty.

In any case, the administrations and user organizations of the Universal Social Card will be subject to the rules of confidentiality and data protection, being periodically audited their use for the purposes that justify it.

- ▶ For the Public Powers, Universal Social Card must become the main instrument of support for decision making in the design of social policies.

We think that the millions of megabytes of information that the system will store, together with a next-generation platform with BIG DATA technology, will greatly facilitate the analysis of reality and decision-making.

The Universal Social Card is conceived as a macrosystem of information in which the different levels of social protection existing in Spain are to be consolidated (contributory, non-contributory, assistance), the situations or the determining factors of risks such as poverty or social exclusion and other information that contribute to define or delimit the environment in which situations of need occur with information from the INE (demographics, employment, economic growth).

The analysis and exploitation of so much information necessarily requires tools such as BIG DATA that allows managing and combining different sources of information at great speed. There is no doubt that the projected System fits perfectly into the philosophy of this technology characterised by the challenges it faces known as the 5 "V": Volume; Velocity; Variety; Veracity and Value

In a first phase that will be completed in October 2018, the Universal Social Card will be implemented as an information system that adds social benefits managed by the National Government, the Autonomous Communities and Cities with Statute of Autonomy (Ceuta and Melilla) as well as those Local Entities that will be added progressively to the project. In this first phase, it means making available:

- ▶ To the citizens, an application to access the consultation to their benefits.
- ▶ For entities and bodies responsible for public benefits, the information necessary for the management and control of benefits.
- ▶ To the public authorities, the statistical exploitations and data analysis that are defined.

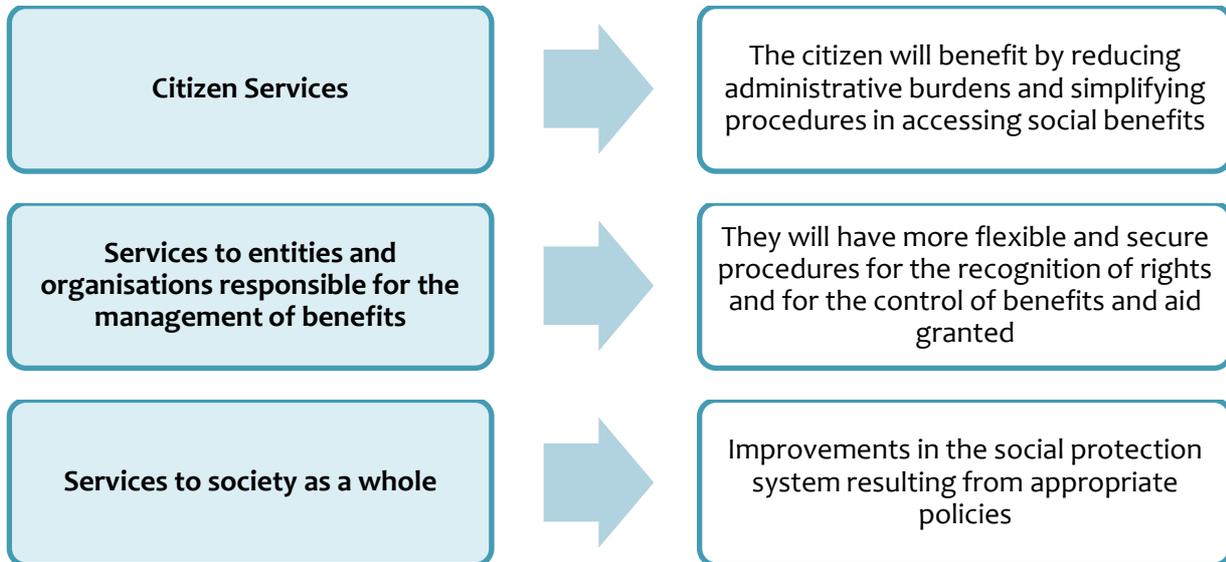
During this first phase of the start-up, the Universal Social Card and the Registry of Public Social Benefits will coexist simultaneously until the developments that are implemented in the Social Card allow us to guarantee the functionalities and services that the Registry currently offers to catalogued entities.

Throughout the last quarter of 2018, we will work intensively with those local entities that have not yet joined the project, completing the social protection map while constantly monitoring the procedures for supplying and updating data in order to guarantee the full validity and reliability of the information.

By way of conclusion, we can say that the Universal Social Card is a project that aims to implement the "Information System of Social Protection in Spain" that will provide service at three levels:

- ▶ Service to the citizen by reducing administrative burdens and simplifying procedures in accessing social benefits.
- ▶ Service to entities and organisations responsible for the management of benefits which will have more flexible and secure procedures for the recognition of rights and for the control of benefits and aid granted.
- ▶ Service to society as a whole with improvements in the social protection system resulting from sound policies.

IMPACT OF IMPROVEMENTS IN SERVICES AS A RESULT OF THE INTRODUCTION OF THE UNIVERSAL SOCIAL CARD



The submission of benefit data will be made as of October 2018 in monthly files according to the structure established by the National Institute of Social Security (INSS).

RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATIONS:

- ▶ Ministry of Labour, Migration and Social Security
- ▶ Autonomous Communities
- ▶ Municipal Governments

ACTIVITY MONITORING SYSTEM:

- ▶ The management, administration, maintenance and control of the Universal Social Card system is attributed to the National Institute of Social Security.

1.2 Access requirements: Reorganisation of state unemployment benefits, Provision of minimum income in the field of Social Security protection.

1.2.a. Reorganisation of state unemployment benefits

The General State Budget Act for 2018 incorporates a **new extraordinary subsidy for unemployment** destined for long-term unemployed and for those who exhaust unemployment benefits and have family responsibilities¹.

On 30 April 2018, the extension of the PREPARA and RAI programmes expired. For this reason and to ensure that the beneficiaries of these programmes are not left unprotected, a series of negotiations with Autonomous Communities and Social Agents was initiated with the aim of unifying these long-term unemployed in a single protection programme. Up to that time, the state system of assistance for the protection of unemployed workers included mainly the following benefits:

- ▶ **Active Income Insertion Program for the Unemployed with special economic needs and difficulty finding a job (RAI):** Provision whose objective is to increase the opportunities of insertion in the labour market of unemployed workers with special financial needs and difficulty in finding employment, also granting an economic aid called Active Insertion Income for the aforementioned group. The Income will be received for a maximum of 11 months and the amount of the Income will be equal to 80% of the Multiple Income Public Income Indicator (IPREM).
- ▶ **Professional Retraining Program (PREPARA):** Aimed at people who have exhausted unemployment benefit or subsidy and have no right to any other benefit or Active Insertion Income. It includes the granting of a 6-month subsidy.
- ▶ **Activation Program for Employment (PAE)** , intended for long-term unemployed with family responsibilities that have exhausted other aid. Its design, agreed with Autonomous Communities and social agents, puts the emphasis on the personalised treatment of the beneficiary, who accesses an articulated insertion plan through the employment services.

This aid (Extraordinary Subsidy for Unemployment) will remain in effect as long as the unemployment rate does not fall below 15% and will benefit the groups with the greatest need and family responsibilities for 6 months and which were covered by previous unemployment protection programs at the time of entry into the General State Budget Act, so that the same requirements are established as previously regulated.

¹ Twenty-Seventh Additional Provision. Extraordinary unemployment subsidy.

The application for the extraordinary unemployment subsidy, which must be accompanied by the supporting documentation of the fulfilment of the access requirements, will imply the subscription of the activity commitment (this activity commitment is explained in more detail later).

The amount of the subsidy will be equal to the 80 percent of the Public Indicator of Income of Multiple Effects (IPREM), monthly and in force at each moment. For this year 2018 the IPREM set in Law 6/2018, of 3 July, General State Budgets for 2018, is €537.84 per month, so **the amount of this Extraordinary Subsidy is €430.4 per month.**

RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATIONS:

- ▶ Ministry of Labour, Migration and Social Security.
- ▶ Autonomous Communities

ACTIVITY MONITORING SYSTEM:

- ▶ The follow-up of this action will be carried out by the Public State Employment Service (SEPE)

1.2.b Provision of minimum income in the field of Social Security protection

A) Popular Legislative Initiative

In February 2017 the Congress of Deputies took into consideration a **"PROPOSED POPULAR LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVE LAW TO ESTABLISH A PROVISION OF MINIMUM INCOME IN THE FIELD OF PROTECTION OF SOCIAL SECURITY"**,² at the proposal of the trade unions CC.OO and UGT, presented in June 2016.

The purpose of this Popular Legislative Initiative is the creation of a new benefit that extends the protective action of Social Security, aimed at guaranteeing income that ensures basic conditions to meet the most essential needs of people who, with availability to work, lack employment and minimal financial resources for themselves and, where appropriate, for their dependants. It is configured as a benefit of subjective right framed in the non-contributory level of Social Security. Financing must be guaranteed via taxes, through the General State Budgets, and must meet the criteria of efficiency and sufficiency and also contribute to achieving greater social and territorial cohesion.

Regarding the requirement of lack of income, the threshold is set at 75% of the Minimum Interprofessional Salary in force at any given time, excluding extraordinary payments, on an annual basis. In the case of family units, the per capita income of the same must not exceed the same amount. In any case, certain income or wages are excluded from the calculation, such as family benefits in their non-contributory form, benefits derived from caring for people in situations of dependency, aids or benefits for children, among others.

² (corresponds to the FILE numbers 120/000035/0000 of the X Legislature and 120/000003/0000 of the XI Legislature). (120/000002)

The Popular Legislative Initiative began its parliamentary procedure in the Employment and Social Security Committee of the Congress of Deputies. As a result, the different Parliamentary Groups expressed their willingness that the Independent Authority of Fiscal Responsibility (AIReF) prepare a report that will clarify its application.

Consequently, the Government, through the Ministries of Labour, Migration and Social Security and Health, Consumption and Social Welfare, by means of an Agreement of the Council of Ministers, on 2 March 2018, entrusted AIReF with the preparation of said report.

Lastly, it should be underlined that AIReF wants the collaboration of social workers in the study and is currently conducting a survey of social workers on the social impact of minimum income programmes.

RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATIONS:

- ▶ Ministry of Labour, Migration and Social Security.
- ▶ Committee on Employment and Social Security of the Congress of Deputies

ACTIVITY MONITORING SYSTEM:

- ▶ The follow-up of this action will be carried out through the publication of the AIReF report.

B) Report on non-contributory pensions and benefits for people with disabilities

In this area of revision of the minimum income benefits of the Social Security, the Institute for the Elderly and Social Services (Imsero) is preparing an evaluation report on the current regulation of non-contributory pensions and social and economic benefits for people with a disability

The final objective of this report is to incorporate new proposals for regulatory changes that define the level of non-contributory protection.

RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATIONS:

- ▶ Ministry of Health, Consumption and Social Welfare.

ACTIVITY MONITORING SYSTEM:

- ▶ The follow-up of this action will be carried out through the publication of the report.

2. IMPROVEMENT OF APPROACHES AND ADAPTATION

2.1 Conditionalities and Coordination of employment and social services: Working Group on Minimum Income for Labour Inclusion, Social Inclusion Network, Activity Commitment

2.1. a Working Group on Minimum Insertion Income

The current instrument to promote cooperation between the Ministry of Health, Consumption and Social Welfare, the Autonomous Communities, Cities of Ceuta and Melilla and the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP) on minimum insertion income, is The Technical Cooperation Working Group, created in 2009 within the Territorial Council of Social Services and the System for Autonomy and Care for Dependency

The objective of the group is to establish a framework for cooperation between the national government and the departments of the Autonomous Regions that manage the minimum income for insertion, for the sharing and analysis of administrative records (data and actions developed) and legislative frameworks, exchange of good practices and exploration of new expectations of minimum guarantee and insertion policies.

In this framework of collaboration, the Ministry of Health, Consumption and Social Welfare prepares the Minimum Insertion Income Report annually, which includes the main data on the management of the provision in the Autonomous Regions and Autonomous Cities. Likewise, through this group the data collection on the Minimum Income has been channelled, for the study of the PROGRESS project and for the AIReF study.

This working group will be in charge of advancing in the determination of common criteria on the conditionalities that in their case have to be required of the persons receiving the minimum insertion income, as well as access requirements, measures of social accompaniment and export of the provision in case of territorial mobility.

RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATIONS:

- ▶ Ministry of Health, Consumption and Social Welfare
- ▶ Autonomous Communities

ACTIVITY MONITORING SYSTEM:

- ▶ The follow-up of this action will be carried out through the Working Group in the Territorial Council of Social Services and the System for Autonomy and Care for Dependency.

2.1. b Social Inclusion Network

The Social Inclusion Network (RIS) is one of the main instruments of cooperation between public administrations and social action entities, in terms of social inclusion and especially active inclusion, the central pillar of insertion in the labour market. The coordination of cooperation and coordination between public employment services and between administrations, social agents and the Third Sector is linked, on the other hand, with the recommendations periodically formulated for Spain by the European Commission.

For its better functioning, the RIS is configured in two Working Groups:

- **Exchange of information between social services and employment services.** This Group focuses on identifying relevant sources of information and ways to share them between employment services and social services, exploring the possibilities of SIUSS to measure the employability of its users and combine it with the tools of active employment policies. In addition, the participation of public employment systems contributes to the exchange with their information systems, such as SISPE.
- **Transitions between minimum income and employment.** In line with the objectives of the Progress Project, this group focuses on analysing the accompanying programmes for beneficiaries of minimum insertion income of the autonomous communities in their transition to employment, trying to enhance the coordination between social services and employment.

The RIS is part of the approved operational programmes co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF), currently within the framework of its Technical Assistance operational programme, for the 2017-2020 period. In its plenary session on 20 June 2017, the RIS agreed on an extensive action plan constituted annually by a plenary session, two meetings of the Permanent Commission and its working groups, three or four days of joint training between the social services and of employment services of the autonomous communities and, at least, one seminar on good practices. In addition, a thematic study and the preparation of bulletins and other communication supports are also planned.

After a year of operation since its incorporation in June 2017, a strong bond of participation has been created between the European Social Fund, the Ministries of Labour and Health and Social Services, the autonomous communities (both in their Employment areas and of Social Services), the Third Sector of Social Action, the social agents and numerous beneficiary entities of the ESF operational programmes.

RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATIONS:

- ▶ Ministry of Health, Consumption and Social Welfare
- ▶ Ministry of Labour, Migration and Social Security
- ▶ Autonomous Communities

ACTIVITY MONITORING SYSTEM:

- ▶ Once the 2017-2020 Action Plan has been set by the RIS Plenary, the Permanent Commission ensures compliance with the programmed actions and the approved spending for each of them. In addition, the Subdirectorate of Social Programmes coordinates all these aspects from the Permanent Secretariat.

2.1.c Activity Commitment of beneficiaries

Both in the subsidy of a transitory nature and in the modification of unemployment protection at the care level, it has been proposed to rationalise and simplify the current system, and at the same time strengthen the link with the active employment policies, by requiring the prior performance of job search actions.

The final provision thirty-fifth of Law 6/2018, of 3 July, of the General State Budget Act for the year 2018 has given new wording to article 41 of the text of the Employment Law, approved by Legislative Royal Decree 3/2015, of 23 October, which includes both the personal employment agreement and the activity commitment of the claimant beneficiaries of unemployment benefits. Specifically, it indicates that, by agreement of the Steering Committee of the Information System of Public Employment Services (SISPE), the conditions for the accreditation of the activity commitment and its certification will be set, formalising said agreement through Resolution of the Director General of the Public Service of State Employment.

Within the framework of collaboration established by the Sectoral Conference on Employment and Labour Issues, on 24 July 2018, the Steering Committee of SISPE was convened to agree on the conditions for the accreditation of the activity commitment and its certification, formalising said agreement by means of a forthcoming resolution, according to the authorisation included in the aforementioned article 41 of the text of the Employment Law.

RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATIONS:

- ▶ Ministry of Labour, Migration and Social Security.
- ▶ Autonomous Communities

ACTIVITY MONITORING SYSTEM:

- ▶ The follow-up of this action will be carried out through the publication of the SISPE.

2.2 Effectiveness of active policies: Annual Employment Policy Plans and Spanish Strategy for Activation of Employment 2017-2020

2.2 Annual Employment Policy Plans and Spanish Strategy for Activation of Employment 2017-2020

The Annual Employment Policy Plan for 2018, framed in the Spanish Employment Activation Strategy 2017-2020, contains the services and programmes for active employment and labour intermediation policies that will be carried out by the Autonomous Communities in the year of its powers to execute the active policies and the Public State Employment Service in execution of the credit reserve established in its budget.

Among its objectives is to measure the effectiveness of employment services provided by the Public Employment Services to recipients of benefits, so that beneficiaries of benefits and unemployment benefits are treated at least in the same proportion as the whole of the unemployed in their territory.

The PAPE is thus developing the **2017-2020 Employment Activation Spanish Strategy**, which places new tools and infrastructures at the disposal of the National Employment System, so that the use of common instruments, exchange of experiences and good practices are the vectors for the modernisation of the system, counting on ten principles of action and three groups of objectives: for the first time it adds key objectives to the strategic and structural objectives.

In the current situation of the labour market, it is necessary to continue with the improvement of the coordination between the different Administrations involved in the provision of services and programmes for active employment policies, in order to achieve an efficient use of the resources destined to facilitate the labour insertion of unemployed workers, in particular women and those groups that have greater difficulty in entering the labour market.

In a context of collaboration between the Public Employment Services, the Autonomous Communities determine the services and programmes that will be developed from the funds distributed by the State Public Employment Service in accordance with the criteria agreed upon in the Sectoral Employment and Labour Issues Conference, for inclusion in the 2018 Plan.

The Annual Employment Policy Plan 2018 is the annual coordination instrument for excellence in the management of employment policies and includes a total of 620 services and programmes, compared to 538 in 2017, which represents an increase of 15.24%. These services and programmes are structured in 6 pillars: Orientation, Training, Employment Opportunities, Equal opportunities in access to employment, Entrepreneurship and Improvement of the institutional framework of the National Employment System. Of these, and in line with the recommendations of the Progress Programme, its Objective 3.3 stands out "the promotion of the activation of benefit recipients and the linking of active and passive policies".

The total amount of active employment policies in 2018 amounts to 2,055.1 million euro, of which, a total of €2,054.8 million come from the budget of the State Public Employment Service (SEPE) and

the remaining 314,673.10 euro are assigned as pre-retirement benefits from the Ministry of Labour, Migrations and Social Security This amount represents an increase of 8.5% compared to 2017

RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATIONS:

- ▶ Ministry of Labour, Migration and Social Security.
- ▶ Autonomous Communities

ACTIVITY MONITORING SYSTEM:

- ▶ The new Strategy gives more importance to follow-up and establishes a system of change management and one of incentives, and a series of evaluation actions, with which it links the results of financing.

2.3. Complementarity: Compatibility between benefits

2.3 Compatibility between benefits

The General State Budget Act for 2018 has clarified the assumptions of compatibility of unemployment benefits with minimum income, social wages or similar aids. In this sense, the benefit and the subsidy will be compatible with the perception of any type of minimum income, social salaries or similar social assistance grants granted by any Public Administration, without prejudice to their calculation for the purposes of compliance with the requirements of lack of income or the existence of family responsibilities in accordance with the provisions of article 275 of the General Social Security Law.

RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATIONS:

- ▶ Ministry of Labour, Migration and Social Security.
- ▶ Autonomous Communities

ACTIVITY MONITORING SYSTEM:

- ▶ The monitoring of this action will be carried out by the competent control bodies in the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Social Security (Steering Committee SISPE, INSS...)

2.4 Family protection policies: Strategy for the Prevention and Fight against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2018-2020, Concerted Plan for Basic Social Services and Credit for Protection of the Family and Attention to Child Poverty, High Commissioner for Child Poverty and Other Measures for the Improvement of the situation of families.

2.4.a National Strategy for the Prevention and Fight against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2018-2020

The Ministry of Health, Consumption and Social Welfare is preparing a new Strategy for the Prevention and Fight against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2018-2020, which will give continuity to the six national action plans to promote social inclusion promoted since 2001 and will constitute one of the leverage policies of the 2030 Agenda of the Spanish Government.

In the draft, approved by the Interministerial Commission created for the purpose, the aim is to address certain strategic goals such as poverty, especially severe, and childhood; the prevention of poverty through investment in education and employment; social protection and administrative coordination.

RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATIONS:

- ▶ Ministry of Health, Consumption and Social Welfare
- ▶ Autonomous Communities

ACTIVITY MONITORING SYSTEM:

- ▶ The Interministerial Commission is the main body to follow up on this action, once it has been definitively approved, without prejudice to the follow-up carried out with the other partners involved in its preparation (autonomous communities, Federation of Municipalities and Provinces) , Third Sector of Social Action and social agents). The plans also include carrying out intermediate reports on compliance with the Strategy and a final report.

2.4.b. Concerted Plan of Basic Benefits of Social Services and Credit for the Protection of the Family and Attention to Child Poverty

The General State Budget of 2018 includes a 100 million euro budget for the development of Basic Social Services Benefits (€40 million) and the protection of the Family (€60 million), with special attention to child poverty.

This programme is intended to address the situation of families who are in severe material deprivation or at risk of poverty or social vulnerability, with dependent children. All this through social projects aimed at covering basic needs in the fields of health, education, housing, employment, accompaniment and social work, family reconciliation, socio-labour insertion, etc.

A new programme has been added to support children and guarantee the basic right to food, leisure and culture of children during school holidays and the reconciliation of family and work life, (additional amount of 5,200,000 euro to the credit for protection of the family and attention to child poverty).

This new programme reinforces the actions carried out by the local and regional administrations, to alleviate the situation of severe material deprivation suffered by certain families in our country, which prevents them from guaranteeing a healthy and balanced diet or taking their children on, at least , one week of holidays or to pay for leisure or cultural activities during the summer holiday months. In addition, during school holidays, they have difficulties in guaranteeing the correct feeding of the boys and girls, upon the cessation of school cafeteria benefits.

This budget is mainly aimed at reducing and improving the situation of social vulnerability of families, in basic needs such as health, education, housing and employment. Part of this budget will also go to support plans for family and work-related reconciliation for families in the process of socio-labour insertion with dependent children, family support such as socio-family counselling, family mediation, family meeting points or socio-educational care of minors.

RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATIONS:

- ▶ Ministry of Health, Consumption and Social Welfare
- ▶ Autonomous Communities

ACTIVITY MONITORING SYSTEM:

- ▶ Territorial Council of Social Services and the System for Autonomy and Care for Dependency.

2.4.c High Commissioner for the fight against child poverty

In addition, as a reaffirmation of the Government's commitment to this aspect of poverty, the new Government set up in June 2018 has approved the creation of the High Commissioner for the fight against child poverty, reporting directly to the Presidency of the Government. Its main objective is to mobilise all the necessary resources from the public and private spheres to improve the situation of families with dependent children who have insufficient financial resources. In particular, it will carry out the following functions:

- ▶ Establish instruments for planning and monitoring public policies aimed at fighting against child poverty.
- ▶ Design systems to evaluate the impact of political decisions on inequality and child poverty.
- ▶ Propose measures and initiatives to the ministerial departments in the areas of their competence.

- ▶ Prepare analyses and studies on inequality and child poverty.
- ▶ Promote the actions of the General State Administration within the scope of its powers and establish cooperation and relationships with other territorial administrations.
- ▶ Analyse the state of child protection in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the rest of the international agreements signed on the subject.

RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATIONS:

- ▶ Presidency of the Government through the High Commissioner for the Fight against Child Poverty.

2.4.d Other measures to improve the situation of families

- ▶ The General State Budget Act for 2018 has **increased the minimum amounts of pensions by 3%**, a figure that will allow an increase in the purchasing power of families. The same increase has applied to non-contributory pensions and benefits for disabled child. In relation to widow's pension for people over 65 without other income, the calculation of the pension has been modified, increasing the amount by 7.7%. The pension is 56% of the calculation base instead of 52%. These measures are common and homogeneous for the entire Country and an annual follow-up will be carried out.
- ▶ The Government and social partners (unions and employers) have reached an agreement for the **minimum interprofessional salary** to reach 850 euro in Spain in 2020. In 2017, the lowest salary that Spaniards receive is 707 euro per month in 14 payments a year for full-time jobs. In 2018 the rise was 4%, to 736 euro per month.
- ▶ Implementation of **paternity leave up** to 4 uninterrupted weeks, expandable by 2 more days for each child from the second, in the cases of childbirth, adoption, multiple foster care, which can be enjoyed on a full or part-time basis of a minimum of 50%, prior agreement with the employer and is compatible and independent of the shared enjoyment of maternity rest periods.
- ▶ Improvement of **support measures for families in energy poverty**, defining the person with severe vulnerability, and the prohibition of the suspension of electricity supply to vulnerable consumers at risk of social exclusion who are being served by the social services of the Public Administrations competent and beneficiaries of the social bonus. The total beneficiaries of the bonus in the second quarter of 2017 have been 2.39 million and it is expected to exceed two and a half million.
- ▶ As additional support that also benefit children, we must mention the funds dedicated to families in emergency situations, both through the tax allocation of the **IRPF**, and through the **Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) 2014-2020**, the latter directed to finance the supply of food for people in need. Within the framework of FEAD and in the field of social accompaniment measures, information is provided to all beneficiaries of food aid about social and employment resources, as well as referral to them.
- ▶ **II National Strategic Plan for Children and Adolescents 2013-2016 (PENIA)**, approved by the Council of Ministers on 5 April 2013, promoted the well-being of children. The general objective of II PENIA was to promote a culture of cooperation between public and private

institutions committed to the promotion and defence of children and adolescents, in response to the new challenges that arise in relation to their welfare. II PENIA, ended on 31 December 2016 with 125 measures and a forecasted expenditure of 5.159 billion euro. It was developed based on the evaluation of the previous plan, with the participation of all the Administrations and the Children's Observatory. For the first time, it had a budget estimate. The Final Evaluation Executive Report of PENIA was presented and approved by the Plenary of the Children's Observatory and is published on its website³.

Once the final evaluation of the II PENIA, a key requirement to undertake a future design of the III PENIA (2019-2022), has begun work to promote a new National Strategic Plan for Childhood and Adolescence that makes visible the collaboration and effort of all public administrations and the third sector to guarantee the application of children's rights in Spain. It has taken into account, among other commitments, both the latest recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child made to Spain last February, and the challenges of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in addition to the conclusions of its evaluation and adoption of new challenges to improve the protection of children under 18 years of age.

In this task, led from the Children's Observatory, are involved the representatives of the various ministerial departments related to the rights of children and adolescents (NNA), the Autonomous Communities and the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP), as well as the main entities of the associative movement that work in favour of the defence and promotion of child rights. This elaboration process began with a situation diagnosis to determine new and urgent needs, specifying the main challenges to be faced through a structured design (participation, vulnerability, education, health and safety), priorities and specific objectives. Currently, a first draft is being worked on that includes all the information collected, analysed and refined by all the participating actors.

For its preparation, the *ad hoc* working group of the Children's Observatory met on 14 December 2017 and requested that all the ministries designate speakers to collect the corresponding measures and to gather the Plenary of the observatory on 12 September 2018, agenda of which should figure, in addition to the attention to Unaccompanied Minors (MENAS) and the Law of Violence against Children, the promotion to the new III PENIA.

In the drafting of the Plan, as well as in the measures that integrate it, the gender perspective will be taken into account, both to address the special situation of vulnerability that girls face, as well as to break down statistical information based on the gender criterion.

III PENIA is directed towards the entire population under 18 years of age, with special attention to the most vulnerable childhood groups. It is a fundamental tool for planning public policies on children.

- ▶ **Comprehensive Family Support Plan (PIAF) 2015-2017**, approved by the Council of Ministers on 14 May 2015, integrating the Government's policies aimed at strengthening the

³ <http://www.observatoriodelainfancia.msssi.gob.es/productos/pdf/INFORME.EVFINALIIPENIAAPROBADOPLENOJULIO2017.pdf>

protection of families until 2017. It was endowed with a budget of 5.4 billion euro in the first year and an estimated total for its entire term of more than 16.334 billion euro. It had 7 strategic lines: social and economic protection of families; conciliation and co-responsibility; support for motherhood and favourable environment for family life; positive parenting; support for families with special needs; family policies: coordination, cooperation and transversality; evaluation of family policies. The priority groups of this Plan include large families, single-parent families and those with people with disabilities.

Among the most important PIAF measures that have come into force are:

- Consideration of unemployed people with family responsibilities as a priority group for active employment policies.
- Increase in the amount of contributory pensions for mothers with two or more children. It means an increase of 5% with 2 children, 10% with 3 children or 15% with 4 or more children, applicable in all Social Security schemes and for Passive Classes. Provisional data for 2017 indicate that there are already more than 300,000 women who receive this supplement and that the gap between men and women has already been corrected by 13%.
- Application of the increase of family minimum income tax (by descendants, by ascendants) and family checks of €1,200 per year (payable in advance at a rate of €100 per month and cumulative) for large families, families with people with disabilities and single parent families with two children. Large families of special category receive twice as much.
- Increase in endowments for social programs to support family and child poverty care (€16 million in 2014, €32 million in 2015, €48 million in 2016, and €60 million in 2017 and 2018).

At the end of 2017 the taxation of public scholarships was improved, raising the exempt amount for these concepts, in order to increase the disposable income of families and in 2018, in the development of these strategic lines, tax benefits have continued improving tax benefits for families with measures such as:

- Increase by 1,000 euro of the deduction for maternity in case of accrediting child care and education expenses for children under 3 years of age.
- Increase by 600 euro per year of the so-called family check for large families for each additional child that exceeds the number of children for which they were classified in the general or special category.
- Possibility of applying a deduction of 1,200 euro per year for a dependent spouse with a disability.

3. IMPROVEMENT OF OPERATIONAL FUNCTIONING

3.1 Information Systems: Universal Social Card (USC)

ALREADY DEVELOPED IN POINT 1.1 c

4. TIMEFRAME 2018

- ▶ **January 2018 (and December 2017):** First meetings for the preparation of the III National Strategic Plan of Childhood and Adolescence (PENIA).
- ▶ **2 March:** Agreement of the Council of Ministers to entrust the Independent Authority of Fiscal Responsibility (AIREF) with a study on the possibility of establishing a minimum income benefit in the scope of Social Security protection, with cost estimates and impact on the sustainability of the system.
- ▶ **26 March:** The Agreement of the Council of Ministers approving the Annual Employment Policy Plan for 2018 was published in the Official State Gazette, which is configured as an instrument for evaluating the services and active employment policy programmes developed by the Public State Employment Service and the Autonomous Communities.
- ▶ **30 April:** Negotiations are started with autonomous communities and social agents, to merge these long-term unemployed aids into a single Programme, which would be initially called Complementary Unemployment Income (RED).
- ▶ **3 May:** The Interministerial Commission of the National Social Inclusion Plan approves a draft of the National Strategy for the Prevention and Fight against Poverty and Social Exclusion, giving an additional term of 10 days for additional contributions from each Ministry, to be submitted to the Council of Ministers.
- ▶ **May, June and November:** Meetings of the Social Inclusion Network (Permanent Commission, working groups and Plenary) in which the deficiencies of coordination between social services and employment are analysed, as well as the disparity of conditions of access to minimum income benefits between different territories and Administrations
- ▶ **1 June:** Creation of the High Commissioner for the fight against child poverty, with direct dependence on the Presidency of the Government.
- ▶ **18 June:** Order of the new Ministry of Labour, Migration and Social Security, by which subsidies from the labour sphere financed from the General State Budgets, including those destined to the execution of the Joint Action Programme for the Improvement of Attention to Long-Term Unemployed are distributed territorially, for their management in 2018 by the autonomous communities with assumed competences.
- ▶ **27 June:** Presentation of the current situation of the Social Services Users Information System (SIUSS) to the working groups of the Social Inclusion Network, in which social and employment services of the autonomous communities, social agents, the Third Sector and ministries with social protection competencies are included.
- ▶ **27 June:** Meetings of the two working groups established in the RIS (Group 1: Exchange of information systems; Group 2: Transition between minimum income and employment).
- ▶ **28 June:** Social Inclusion Network: Joint training session on Employment / Social Services in the Autonomous Community of Valencia.

- ▶ **28 June:** The Plenary Congress of Deputies definitively approved the General State Budget Project for 2018.
- ▶ **4 July:** Publication of *"Law 6/2018, of 3 July, of General State Budget for the year 2018"* (Official State Gazette No. 161, Wednesday, 4 July 2018), which includes a line of 100 million euro destined to the Programme for Basic Benefits of Social Services and of Protection to the Family and Attention to Childhood Poverty. Also the budgetary allocations for the new calls of the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) and of social interest programmes charged to personal income tax. And lastly, novel instruments such as the Youth Guarantee Training Bond, the Conversion to Indefinite Bonus, the Universal Social Card and the Extraordinary Unemployment Subsidy, together with a 3% increase in the minimum amount of pensions.
- ▶ **4 August:** Publication of *"Royal Decree-law 8/2018, of 3 August, which regulates the Activation for Employment Programme"*, with a single Article that modifies article 5.3 of Royal Decree-law 16/2014, of 19 December, which regulates the Activation for Employment Programme, extending the term of reincorporation of people who have taken temporary leave."
- ▶ **12 September:** Meeting of the Plenary of the Observatory to give a new impetus to the III National Strategic Plan for Childhood and Adolescence (PENIA).
- ▶ **22-23 November:** Seminar on good practices ("one-stop" Employment / Social Services), organised by the Autonomous Community of Navarre within the framework of the Social Inclusion Network.

"KEY" DATES FOR THE CREATION OF THE UNIVERSAL SOCIAL CARD:

- ▶ **17 January 2017:** Agreement of the Conference of Presidents of "Create within three months a Working Group with participation of the General State Administration, the Autonomous Communities, the Cities with Statute of Autonomy and the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces for the design and start-up of the Universal Social Card, also incorporating the contributions of the Third Sector of Social Action.
- ▶ **13 February 2017::** Government meeting, under the direction of the Vice President of the Government, to analyse the progress of the social card: Ministers of the Presidency, Finance, Employment, Energy and Health.
- ▶ **19 April 2018:** Appearance at the parliamentary headquarters of the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Employment and Social Security. The Undersecretary presented before the Committee on Employment and Social Security of the Congress of Deputies, the main lines of the budget of the Ministry of Employment and Social Security for 2018, in which he stressed that the Project of the General State Budgets for 2018 included actions related to the project of Universal Social Card, making effective the mandate of the Conference of Presidents of January 2017.

- ▶ **04 July 2018:** Publication of “Law 6/2018, of 3 July, the General State Budget Act for the year 2018” (Official State Gazette 161 Wednesday, 4 July 2018). Law 6/2018 includes in its "Additional provision one hundred and forty-first. Creation of the Universal Social Card" by which the Universal Social Card is created as an information system, in order to improve and coordinate the social protection policies promoted by the different public administrations, understood as an information system.

- ▶ **14 September 2018:** "Resolution of 14 September 2018, of the National Institute of Social Security, which establishes the technical requirements necessary for the development and application of the "Universal Social Card" (Official State Gazette Number 228, Thursday 20 September 2018).