

Economics at the service of society

22-23 November 2018

MUNDO B Rue d'Edimbourg 26, 1050 Brussels

Everyone has questions about the economy.



Thursday 22 November

14h00-17h30 Expert Seminar

17h30-20h00 Eat&Meet with Mike Goodwin and Dan E. Burr, authors of the American graphic novel "Economix: How our economy works (and doesn't work) in words and pictures."

Friday 23 November

9h00-13h00 Expert Seminar (part II)

“Economics is too important to be left to economists.” This statement encapsulates the rationale behind our seminar. Indeed, it would seem that economic considerations and arguments carry more weight than any other when it comes to move the dial in any policy discussion. While everyone nods and pats each other on the back on the mention of the respect of international human rights treaties, the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, the transformative 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, and other laudable principles, there always comes a time when someone says “fine, but who will pay for it?”, signaling the end of the party, the cold shower bringing idealists back to “reality” and number crunching. If 1+1 doesn’t add up to 2, then we cannot have citizens “living in dignity”.

While civil society organisations thrive when it comes to defending high moral and ethical principles and defending the general interest, discussing economics directly takes the wind out of their sails. The following conference aims at learning to sail against the wind, navigating in the murky and obscure economics waters in order to increase the odds of translating ideals into practice and make a difference in the lives of European citizens.

The following seminar will be broken down into three parts:

- The first part will look at the **state of play** of the economic and financial system. Where are we now? How did we get here? What are the problems we are struggling with? Where are we heading? What are the implications for civil society and social policies?
- The second part will examine **concrete measures** at the local/micro-economic level and how these measures impact people directly, bridging macro-economic policy orientations with social policy measures on the ground.
- The third part will explore **innovative and ground breaking solutions** that could revolutionise our current economic systems for better or for worse. While most of our effort is always to look at how we can “tweak” the current system to work better and in the interest of citizens, we should not shy away from looking at alternatives and new ways of thinking.

This seminar is perfect for anyone that dreams of a better society, but has always avoided looking at the “hard economics” side, and leaving it to the “experts”, only to find out later, that economics was the wrench thrown into otherwise perfect policy recommendations.

Programme

Thursday 22nd November

14.00-14.30	Welcome of participants – registration – coffee
14.30-14.40	Welcome address by Annemie Drieskens , President, COFACE Families Europe
14.40-15.30	<p>Keynotes</p> <p><i>Social and economic progress: two sides of the same coin?</i> Jeroen Jutte, Head of Unit, DG EMPL, European Commission</p> <p><i>The Social in Economics</i> Martin Schmalzried, Policy and Advocacy Manager, COFACE</p>
15.30-16.00	Tea break
16.00-17.00	<p>Plan A - State of play and orthodox macro-economics</p> <p><i>It's been 10 years since the financial crisis, yet despite all the additional regulatory measures, key indicators remain worrying: poverty and inequality has increased, salaries have stagnated, tax avoidance and evasion is far from solved, austerity measures continue to be applied and growth is lack luster. This first session will look back at the past decade, examine the state of play of the economy and where to go from here. What has been done since the financial crisis? Did we learn our lesson? Are we on the verge of yet another crisis? What is the more general macro-economic environment? What can Europe do in a globalized economy with more and more international players? How can we reconcile the international, European and national economic contexts? What is the interplay between these three levels of decision-making? Is the current institutional framework and macro-economic policy model fit for achieving social aims?</i></p> <p>Keynote: Benoît Lallemand, Secretary General of Finance Watch</p> <p>Panel debate between panel members, moderator and audience</p> <p>Moderator: Kelig Puyet, Director, Social Platform</p> <p>Speakers: Benoît Lallemand, Secretary General of Finance Watch Eric Meyermans, Economist, DG ECFIN, European Commission Molly Scott Cato, Member of European Parliament Martin Schmalzried, Policy and Advocacy Manager, COFACE</p>
17.30-20.00	<p>Close of the first day with an Eat&Meet session, moderated by Florian Charron, Senior Project and Finance Manager, COFACE</p> <p>Fun take on economics with Mike Goodwin and Dan E. Burr, authors of the American graphic novel “Economix: How our economy works (and doesn’t work) in words and pictures.” Meet the authors, get an autograph, find out about Economix behind the scenes. Grab a drink and listen to Mike strip back some of the veil in front of the economics profession, while Dan illustrates some of their ideas in real time.</p>

Friday 23rd November

8.30-9.00	Morning coffee
09.00-10.30	<p>Break-out sessions, case studies – from macro to micro – economics at the service of society</p> <p><i>Overarching economic policy orientations have a deep impact on what local actors can achieve on the ground, at the “micro” level. The break-out sessions will examine specific case studies covering COFACE-Families Europe social inclusion agenda: how to fund key social services such as child care/long term care and promote access to financial services? How is the “micro” affected by overarching economic policies? What is the impact of divesting funds away from social services and social inclusion for the people, on the ground? Why is it important for civil society to get involved in the wider debate about economic policy orientations? Are there examples of successful initiatives that have worked at the local level?</i></p> <hr/> <p>Session 1: Childcare services</p> <p><i>This case study session will examine the business models used to provide childcare (public, private, mix), addressing questions of how to pay for childcare and ensuring that childcare costs remain affordable (with minimum inflation).</i></p> <p>Moderator: Liz Gosme, Director, COFACE</p> <p>Speakers: Servane Martin, Policy analyst, Union Nationale des Associations Familiales (UNAF), France Andrej Del Fabro, Director General, Family Directorate, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal opportunities, Slovenia Ramon Palomino, Director of employment and social affairs department of Madrid, Spain</p> <hr/> <p>Session 2: Community-based services</p> <p><i>This session will focus on long-term care (as a specific sub-set of community-based services), exploring the financial sustainability of such services, what funding models to use, workforce costs for quality care, and more.</i></p> <p>Moderator: Irene Bertana, Policy and Advocacy Officer, COFACE</p> <p>Speakers: Rait Kuuse, Deputy Secretary General on Social Policy from the Ministry of Social Affairs, Estonia Tiago Cravo Oliveira, Health policy analyst, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Magdi BIRTHA, Researcher, European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research</p>

Session 3: Access to financial services

This session will focus on access to basic financial services which is a precondition for social inclusion. Having a bank account to make/receive payments, getting a mortgage to access housing, being covered by an insurance policy... The session will provide an overview of the concrete solutions for the most deprived to the average citizen.

Moderator: **Martin Schmalzried**, Policy and Advocacy Manager, COFACE

Speakers:

Daniel Alvarez, Project manager, Foundation Single-parent families Isadora Duncan, Spain

Annika Cayrol, Research coordinator, Financité, Belgium

Peter Jayaswal, Executive Director, Finance Denmark, Association of Danish Mortgage Banks, Denmark

10.30-11.00

Coffee break

11.00-13.00

Plan B: Thinking outside of orthodox economics

*TINA, also known as “there is no alternative”, is the idea that one should accept to leave economic policy to experts, and that there are “no alternatives” to the current mainstream economic model. But perhaps other approaches are possible. The last session will explore innovative ideas, thinking outside the box and imagining other economic models which may not only help weather a future crisis, but also bring about profound societal changes through monetary policy in the interest of the people and bottom up economics. Whether you believe in Plan A or Plan B, one thing is clear: the only constant throughout history is **change**. Whether now or in a more or less distant future, let us examine some alternatives which may help us get closer to a “better society”.*

Keynotes:

Stanislas Jourdan, Head of Positive Money Europe

Olivier Auber, VUB Researcher, “Libre” currencies and the Relative Theory of Money

Panel debate between panel members, moderator and audience

Moderator: **Martin Schmalzried**, Policy and advocacy manager, COFACE

Olivier Auber, VUB Researcher, “Libre” currencies and the Relative Theory of Money

Sylvain Bouyon, Research Fellow and Head of Retail Finance & Fintech Programme, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)

Patrick Develtere, Principle Adviser, European Political Strategy Centre

Stanislas Jourdan, Head of Positive Money Europe

13.00

Closing words and next steps by **Liz Gosme**, COFACE Director.