EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Directorate-General

Service Order No. VC/2011/0108

"Analysis and Follow-up of Mutual Learning in the Context of Peer Review in the Social Protection and Social Inclusion Programme"

TASK 4
DELIVERABLE 4

PEER COUNTRY ASSESSEMENT: SYNTHESIS REPORT

May 2012

Ose
European
Social
Observatory

VIEŠOSIOS POLITIKOS IR VADYBOS INSTITUTAS
PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

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⭕ LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFSW	Association of the Field Social Workers (Czech Republic /Slovakia)
AWBZ	Exceptional Medical Expenses Act (the Netherlands)
BMASK	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (Austria)
BTPG	Bridging the Policy Gap
DIS	Right to Social Integration (Belgium)
DWP	Department of Work and Pensions (UK)
E-Qalin	European Quality Management System for Residential Facilities
EAPN	European Anti-Poverty Network
EC	European Commission
EPiC	Evidence Participation Change
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
FQA	Bavarian supervisory Bodies for care homes
HRD OP	Human Resources Development Operational Programme 2007-2013 (Bulgaria)
JOKE	Youth Impact Assessment (Belgium)
LTC	Long-term care
MDK	Medical services of Health Insurance Funds (Germany)
NAV	Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (Norway)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NAPInclusion	(EU) National Action Plan Against Poverty and Social Exclusion
NSR/SPSI	National Reports on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion
OMC	Open Method of Coordination
OSE	European Social Observatory
PCIE	Peer country independent expert
PCO	Peer country official representative
PPMI	Public Policy and Management Institute
PR	Peer Reviews
PROGRESS	Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity
RIA	Regulatory Impact Assessment (Belgium)
SIA	Sustainability Impact Assessment (Belgium)
SIF	Social Inclusion Forum
SPTF	Social Policy Task Force
SSLP	Sure Start Local Programme (England)
WMO	Social Support Act (The Netherlands)

INTRODUCTION: ONCE UPON A PEER REVIEW ASSESSMENT

This Synthesis Report is part of a collaborative research project ([1]) carried out by the Public Policy and Management Institute (PPMI) and the European Social Observatory (OSE). It deals with the Peer Review in Social Protection and Social Inclusion Programme. The study examines the role played by the PROGRESS Peer Review Programme in stimulating innovation in social inclusion and social protection policies across the EU, particularly through mutual learning.

The specific **objectives** of the research project are as follows:

1. To provide an **overview and mapping of the Peer Reviews** that have been organized so far (Task 1). This deliverable was submitted by the PPMI to the European Commission in July 2011 (PPMI and OSE, 2011a).
2. To examine **the contribution of the Peer Reviews to 'consensus framing'** within the Social OMC through an in-depth analysis of the messages that have come out of the Peer Review process (Task 2). This deliverable was submitted by the PPMI in July 2011 (PPMI and OSE, 2011b).
3. To follow up **a selection of ten Peer Reviews** on a particular policy or project in the *host country* and examine **factors of success and failure** (Task 3). This deliverable was submitted by the OSE in May 2012 (OSE and PPMI, 2012a).
4. To examine **to what extent, under which circumstances, from whom, and by whom learning has taken place** as a result of *peer countries'* participation in ten selected Peer Reviews, and in that process identify elements conducive to such mutual learning (Task 4). This is the subject of the present Synthesis Report prepared by the OSE.
5. Based on the project's findings, to propose a set of **recommendations** that could help the European Commission and the Member States to further improve the Peer Review process (Task 5). This deliverable was submitted by the OSE in May 2012 (OSE and PPMI, 2012b).

The authors of the present deliverable - Sebastiano Sabato and Bart Vanhercke (OSE) - are grateful for having been able to **draw extensively on ten case studies produced by some 15 OSE, PPMI, and external experts** (see bibliography and Annex 1 for more details), who also commented on earlier drafts of this Synthesis Report. Special thanks go to Ivan Dumka from the University of Victoria, whose editorial comments clearly went beyond mere language issues and greatly helped to improve the quality of the report. We also benefited from different rounds of comments, feedback, and patience from the European Commission officials who followed the project along the way. The authors are, of course, solely responsible for any remaining errors.

This draft Synthesis Report is structured as follows: s**ection 1** briefly outlines the scope of the assignment as well as the research methodology and key questions asked. **Section 2** summarizes the similarities and differences between the host and the peer countries attending each of the ten meetings in our sample. It also provides a brief description of changes in peer countries' practices after the Peer Review meeting. **Section 3** discusses the main features of peer countries' participation in the meetings, i.e. the composition of their delegations, their expectations before the Peer Reviews, the issues that were of greatest interest to them during the meetings, and the roles assumed by peer countries' representatives (the tutor/learner dimensions). **Section 4** focuses on the outcomes of Peer Reviews in the selected peer countries,

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1. Service Order No. VC/2011/0108 "Analysis and follow-up of mutual learning in the context of Peer Review in the Social Protection and Social Inclusion Programme", financed under the PROGRESS Programme.

distinguishing among networking, cognitive effects (the acquisition of new knowledge by national organizations and institutions), discursive diffusion (the use of that new knowledge in domestic debates), and finally policy transfer (changes in national practices which can be plausibly linked to the participation to the Peer Review). **Section 5** examines whether and how information about the Peer Review meetings has been disseminated in the peer countries, and explores the mechanisms behind the cases of policy transfer. **Section 6** identifies organizational and contextual features that are conducive to mutual learning and policy transfer. The conclusions in **section 7** bring this report to a close by revisiting the research questions and hypothesis.

○ 1. SCOPE OF THE ASSIGNMENT, RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND QUESTIONS

The **conclusions** of Deliverable 2 of this assignment on 'consensus framing' within the Social OMC (PPMI and OSE, 2011b) confirmed that the PROGRESS Peer Review programme is delivering on at least one objective, namely to contribute to a better understanding of Member States' policies, as laid down in their National Reports on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion (NSR/SPSI). The question remained however, as to whether the Peer Reviews are delivering on another key objective, i.e. *to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the social policies in the Member States and at EU level, by learning from the experiences in other Member States.*

The specific aim of Task 4 of this service contract is therefore to evaluate, through an in–depth analysis of 10 specific Peer Reviews (the selection of these case studies has been elaborated in Section 1 of Deliverable 3 (2)), **whether and how the PROGRESS peer review process is conducive to policy learning in participant countries** (rather than the host countries, which were the focus of Deliverable 3). Our analysis has been focused on a selection of one "key" participant country for each of the case studies. That is to say that we concentrated our qualitative assessment on peer countries which seemed to "have a stake" in the PROGRESS Peer Review (for example, countries with very active participants or with representatives explicitly indicating that they would draw on the Peer Review for domestic purposes). This means that our selection of participant countries has not been 'random' (and is thus to some extent biased), as we selected those countries where there was an indication that, in terms of policy learning, "something may be going on".

Table 1 below shows the nine peer countries (column 1) that have been looked at in detail in the ten selected case studies. These peer countries are Austria (AT), Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), Denmark (DK), Hungary (HU), Romania (RO), Slovakia (SK), The Netherlands (NL), and the United Kingdom (UK), which was the selected peer country in two cases.

For each of the 10 selected peer countries, experts carried out an in-depth analysis on mutual learning. They did so building on existing sources of information, especially documentary analysis and Annex 3 of Deliverable 1 of this assignment, which served as background (3). The notion of "in-depth analysis" refers first and foremost to the fact that experts used a **variety of sources** (**triangulation**) so as to be able to make credible claims about policy learning, and not to restrict the analysis to the data derived from official Peer Review reports or interviews. For some case studies, analysis was provided about policy learning in one or two *additional* peer countries, which we will refer to as our 'shadow cases' (4). The analysis of these additional

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2. OSE and PPMI (2012a).
3. PPMI produced a documentary analysis, based on the Immediate and Impact Evaluations and other secondary documents, regarding the factors that are conducive or contributed to mutual learning in the 10 selected case studies. Experts producing the case studies were able to use this information, and extract whatever was relevant to their cases (PPMI and OSE, 2011a). A second source of background information for experts to prepare Task B was Annex 3 of Deliverable 1 (Ibid: 57-91) prepared by PPMI, which presents quotations from peer review participants regarding the potential for policy transfer (of the difficulties hindering such a transfer). More generally, experts were invited to use any information they as saw relevant for this Task B from Deliverables 1 and 2.
4. These shadow cases include: Finland, which attended the English Peer Review on the 'Rough Sleepers Unit' (UK 2004); Belgium, Hungary, and Spain, which attended the Irish Peer Review on 'The NAPInclusion Social Inclusion Forum' (IE 2007); Spain and Poland, which attended the

countries was less in-depth (e.g. no triangulation of sources) and should therefore be interpreted carefully.

Table 1. Studied Peer Countries and selected Peer Reviews

Peer Country Studied	Peer Review (Year)	Topic	Abbreviation in Text [5]
Denmark (DK)	United Kingdom (2004)	The Rough Sleepers Unit (England)	UK 2004
Slovakia (SK)	Czech Republic (2005)	Field social work programmes in neighbourhoods threatened by social exclusion	CZ 2005
Romania (RO)	Belgium (2005)	Minimum Incomes and social integration institutional arrangements	BE 2005
Hungary (HU)	United Kingdom (2006)	The UK government's Sure Start programme	UK 2006
The Netherlands (NL)	Sweden (2007)	Freedom of choice and dignity for the elderly	SE 2007
Bulgaria (BG)	Spain (2007)	Multi-Regional Operational Programme to Combat Discrimination	ES 2007
United Kingdom (UK)	Ireland (2007)	The NAPInclusion Social Inclusion Forum	IE 2007
Belgium (BE)	Slovakia (2008)	Social Impact Assessment	SK 2008
United Kingdom (UK)	Norway (2009)	Developing well-targeted tools for the active inclusion of vulnerable people	NO 2009
Austria (AT)	Germany (2010)	Achieving quality long-term care in residential facilities	DE 2010

As a rule some 10 ([6]) semi-structured interviews with the "key actors" in each case study were conducted (some 100 in total). These interviews were conducted face-to-face, by Skype, by phone, and by e-mail. Interviews for **Task 4 focussed on peer country representatives**, the thematic expert, and EU officials. In several case studies, host country representatives and non-participants were interviewed if they had relevant insights about policy learning in the peer country.

The methodological caveats in Section 1 of Deliverable 3 (OSE and PPMI, 2012a), including the difficulties of tracing 'policy learning' and the requirement for the experts to conduct detailed process tracing, also apply to this Synthesis Report. *Firstly*, we know from Nedergaard (2006) that actors are themselves frequently unaware or unable to remember what they learned, making it inherently difficult to measure learning. *Secondly*, there is often a conflict between what people say they believe and their actions (espoused theory vs. theory in use). Although people often claim to have learned new ideas and practices, this is frequently not manifested in their behaviour (Easterby-Smith, 1997, p. 1089), and hence the importance of distinguishing between *individual* and *institutional* learning.

Norwegian Peer Review on 'developing well-targeted tools for the active inclusion of vulnerable people' (NO 2009).
5.   See bibliography for detailed references to the ten case studies.
6.   The number of interviews ranged between 7 and 12, depending on respondent availability in the particular case studies, see Annex 1.

The same is true with respect to the challenges involved in (and solutions found for) reaching the former Peer Review participants. Again, it is our contention that through the extensive use of primary and secondary written sources, and by conducting semi-structured interviews, ten credible case studies allow for the undertaking of a sound horizontal analysis. We turn to these case studies in the next section. In the remainder of this report we will **refer to the ten case studies using the abbreviations as in the last column of Table 1 above** (see the bibliography for the complete case study references).

Relying on the existing definitions in the literature (see Inception Report ([7])) we understand mutual learning in this project as:

> A process whereby Member States and other countries exchange information about each other's policies and where the knowledge gained stimulates the rethinking of one's own approaches and practices, or to re-evaluate the performance of national policies. Lessons learned are fully or partially transferred to the respective national context by emulation (positive learning), or avoiding policy mistakes (learning from failure).

The examination of the case studies for Task 4 has been structured around three evaluation questions:

Question 1: Who has been learning what and from whom (identifying "learners" and "tutors")?

For the purpose of exploring the **direction and content** of the mutual learning process, we made an analytical distinction, as proposed by Nedergaard (2006), between those who learned and those from whom the learning took place. Countries will be referred to as **learners** if their representatives expressed such an interest; meanwhile the countries will be referred as **tutors** in case they participate to the PR with the primary aim to "teach" their European peers about their success story.

To identify the tutors and learners in the Peer Review process we analysed the data from the immediate and impact evaluations by country and Peer Review, as well as the Comment Papers. Based on this data analysis, enriched with interviews with peer countries' representatives, we identified which country at which Peer Review aimed to learn from host or peer countries and how far the expectations of the countries were met.

Question 2: What can we learn about features in the process which are conducive to mutual learning?

Since we know which Peer Reviews were more or less successful in terms of mutual learning (based on results of Q1) we relate the success with particular features in the process of Peer Reviews. We aimed to analyse, for example, if the topic chosen, format of Peer Reviews (timing, site visits, working group methodology, etc.), the quality of the papers presented as well as other features in the process were conducive to mutual learning.

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7.   PPMI and OSE (2011c).

Question 3: What can we learn about transferability conditions (conditions under which policy transfer between Member States can occur)?

We also set out to analyse conditions under which policy transfer can occur. The aim is to test a number of hypotheses, which are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Hypotheses on Transferability Conditions

Hypotheses on Transferability Conditions	How We Assess
Transferability is greater between 'similar' Member States (in terms of institutional setup).	We examine if the Peer Reviews were more successful in terms of mutual learning when more similar countries participated.
Transferability is greater in certain issue areas (social inclusion) than in others (pensions, healthcare).	We examine if the level of success of Peer Reviews in terms of mutual learning was higher in some issue areas than in others.
Transferability is greater at the procedural level (initiating interactions which were not present before the PR) than at the substantive level (on policy thinking and policy decisions).	We examine if the level of success of Peer Reviews in terms of mutual learning was higher when procedural issues were discussed compared to cases where substantive issues were analysed.
Transferability is lower in new Member States (acceded after 2004), e.g. due to other pressures (problem load, international influence) on domestic welfare states.	We examine the relationship between the level of success of Peer Reviews in terms of mutual learning and participation of new Member States.
Transferability is greater where formal mechanisms for dissemination of lessons learned exist.	We examine whether the level of success of Peer Reviews in terms of mutual learning was higher in those countries where formal mechanisms for dissemination of lessons learned exist.

We will revisit the evaluation questions as well as the hypotheses on transferability conditions in the concluding section.

In sum, this section introduced this Synthesis Report as part of a larger PROGRESS Peer Review assessment. The aim is to evaluate, through an in–depth analysis of 10 specific Peer Reviews, whether and how the PROGRESS peer review process is conducive to policy learning in participant countries. Nine peer countries have been looked at in ten selected case studies (the UK having participated in two PR). The in-depth analysis on mutual learning used a variety of sources (triangulation) and some 100 semi-structured interviews in total with the "key actors" participating in the Peer Reviews. The analysis allows answering our three evaluation questions: *who has been learning what and from whom* (identifying "learners" and "tutors"); *what can we learn about features in the process which are conducive to mutual learning*; *what can we learn about transferability conditions* (conditions under which policy transfer between Member States can occur)? In the next section we meet our 10 peer countries and the reviewed practices.

2. THE CASE STUDIES: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HOST AND PEER COUNTRIES

This section aims to summarize the ten case studies in our sample by comparing the *host* and the *peer countries* which attended each Peer Review meeting along three dimensions: duration of EU membership (2.1), the welfare regime cluster to which they belong (2.2), and the degree of similarity among their national practices (2.3) (⁸). In the last sub-section (2.4) we focus on the practices existing in the selected peer countries: we describe whether they underwent significant changes in the period after the PROGRESS Peer Review meeting.

2.1 Duration of EU membership

As can be seen from Table 3, among the 10 peer countries selected for in-depth analysis, countries which joined the EU between 1958 and 1995 ("EU 15") constitute the larger group (6 out of 10). This is the case for Austria (participant in DE 2010), Denmark (participant in UK 2004), the Netherlands (participant in SE 2007), the United Kingdom (participant in IE 2007), Belgium (participant in SK 2008), and again the United Kingdom (participant in NO 2009).

In 4 out of 10 cases, the selected peer country joined the EU in 2004 or 2007: Bulgaria (participant in ES 2007), Hungary (participant in UK 2006), Romania (participant in BE 2005), and Slovakia (participant in CZ 2005).

Table 3. Peer Countries Reviewed (EU 15 and EU 12)

EU 15	EU 12
Austria (in DE 2010) Denmark (in UK 2004); The Netherlands (in SE 2007) United Kingdom (in IE 2007)	Bulgaria (in ES 2007) Hungary (in UK 2006) Romania (in BE 2005)
Belgium (in SK 2008)	Slovakia (in CZ 2005)
United Kingdom (in NO 2009)	
Total peer countries EU 15: six	**Total** peer countries EU 12: four

Concerning the duration of EU membership of both peer and host countries, we have a varied sample which includes:

- Four cases in which both the host *and* the peer country are EU 15 member states (top left cell in Table 3): Austria (in DE 2010), Denmark (in UK 2004), The Netherlands (in SE 2007) and the United Kingdom (in IE 2007);

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8. Here we mean similarities and differences between the host country practice submitted to the Peer Review and equivalent practices existing in the selected peer country. It is important to note that our sample includes different types of practices (see OSE and PPMI, 2012a): specific programmes (UK 2004; CZ 2005; UK 2006; ES 2007; NO 2009), policy approaches (IE 2007; SE 2007), evaluation methodologies (SK 2008), and policy reforms (BE 2005; DE 2010).

- Three cases in which the peer country is an EU 12 Member State while the host is an EU 15 Member State (top right cell in Table 3): Bulgaria (in ES 2007), Hungary (in UK 2006), Romania (in BE 2005);
- One case in which the peer country is an EU 15 member state while the host is an EU 12 Member State: Belgium (in SK 2008);
- One case in which both the host and the peer country are EU 12 member states: Slovakia (in CZ 2005);
- One case in which the host country is not an EU member state while the peer country is an EU 15 member state: United Kingdom (in NO 2009).

This variation in our sample should allow us to tease out differences (if any) in learning opportunities between EU15 and EU 12 Member States.

2.2 Host and peer countries' welfare regimes

With respect to welfare regime type to which the selected peer countries belong (see in particular Esping-Andersen 1990 and 1996; Ferrera 1996), our sample is highly diverse (see Table 4):

- In two cases peer countries belong to the Corporatist or Continental regime: Belgium and Austria;
- One peer country (which shows up in two case studies) belongs to the Liberal or Anglo-Saxon regime: the United Kingdom;
- In two cases peer countries belong to the Social-Democratic or Northern regime: Denmark and the Netherlands ([9]);
- In four cases peer countries belong to the Transitional or Central-Eastern regime (Slovakia, Romania, Hungary and Bulgaria).

The sample of peer countries selected for this report does not include countries belonging to the Southern European regime. However, as we will see below, some of the "shadow cases" do belong to this welfare regime type, and so we are able to draw some inferences about the Southern regime (Spain in IE 2007 and in NO 2009).

Table 4. Similarities and differences in terms of welfare regime type between Peer and Host (between brackets in table) countries

		Peer Country Welfare Regime				
		Corporatist	Liberal	Social-Dem.	Transitional	Southern
Host Country Welfare Regime	Corporatist	Austria (in DE 2010)			Romania (in BE 2005)	/
	Liberal		United Kingdom (in IE 2007)	Denmark (in UK 2004)	Hungary (in UK 2006)	/
	Social-Dem.		United Kingdom (in NO 2009)	The Netherlands (in SE 2007)		/
	Transitional	Belgium (in SK 2008)			Slovakia (in CZ 2005)	/
	Southern				Bulgaria (in ES 2007)	

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9.   The Netherlands is a Nordic/Social democratic regime with continental features.

What emerges when examining the host and peer countries characteristics in terms of welfare regimes type (Table 4) is that our sample consists of:

- 4 case studies in which the host and the selected peer countries belong to *the same* cluster of welfare regimes (highlighted in Table 4): Austria (in DE 2010), United Kingdom (in IE 2007), The Netherlands (in SE 2007) and Slovakia (in CZ 2005);
- 6 cases in which they belong to *different* welfare regimes: Belgium (in SK 2008), Bulgaria (in ES 2007), Denmark (in UK 2004), Hungary (in UK 2006), Romania (in BE 2005), United Kingdom (in NO 2009).

This variation in our sample should allow us to tease out differences (if any) in learning opportunities between 'similar' and 'dissimilar' welfare regimes, even if section 2.3 will call for some prudence in this respect.

2.3 Similarities and differences between host and peer countries' practices

As discussed in Deliverable 3, four different types of policy practices were reviewed during the meetings selected for this analysis: specific programmes, policy approaches, evaluation methodologies and policy reforms (OSE and PPMI, 2012a: section 2.2). Furthermore, irrespective of the kind of practice reviewed, in each PR meeting, discussions have been 'mixed'. This means that during the meetings devoted to the analysis of a 'policy approach', participants also discussed issues related to the practical implementation of that approach, such as governance arrangements, specific programmes etc. (Ibid). Furthermore, during Peer Reviews focusing on specific programmes implemented by the host country, the discussion of the underlying approaches and values came to the fore. Given the diversity of the proposed practices and the breadth of discussion held, assessing the extent to which a practice proposed by a host country is really similar or dissimilar to that in another country is difficult.

This said, in our judgement, some meaningful distinctions can be made (see Table 5 below). In some cases, **the practice under review and practices existing in the selected peer country** can be considered to be broadly similar (even if there is considerable variation).

This was for example the case for **Slovakia (in CZ 2005)**. The focus of this Peer Review was the spatial concentration of excluded people in socially excluded localities. This issue was addressed by examining the experience of the programme 'Field Social Work Programmes in Neighbourhoods threatened by Social Exclusion', run by the NGO People in Need in the Czech Republic (host country). The programme was in operation since 1999 and primarily aimed at assisting socially excluded families and individuals (many of whom were Roma) who suffered the highest levels of social exclusion in the Czech Republic. In Slovakia, a programme similar to the one presented by the organisation People in Need in the Czech Republic, namely 'Field Social Work in Socially Excluded Communities', was implemented by the Association of the Field Social Workers (AFSW) since 2002/2003 ([10]). The Association was inspired by, and learned from, the Czech experiences, although adaptations to the Slovak conditions were made ([11]).

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10. As reported in the Slovakian case study, the organisation *People in Need* had a branch in Slovakia too. The Association of Field Social Workers cooperated closely at the beginning of its activity with the Czech Branch of *People in Need*.
11. Notably, differences between the two programs depended on the different spatial distribution of the Roma population in the two countries: while in the Czech Republic Roma people mostly live in urban areas and the main problems for them are unemployment, housing and rent defaulting, in Slovakia the socially excluded Roma are mostly concentrated in town ghettos and rural settlements and, apart from unemployment, a major problem is discrimination and denial of fundamental civic rights.

A second example is **Hungary (in UK 2006)**. The topic of the 2006 British Peer Review was the 'UK government's Sure Start Programme', a programme targeting young children in families living in the most deprived areas of England. The main feature of this programme was the development of an integrated, service-based approach to child poverty in which an important role was played by 'service hubs', which means that the SSLP (Sure Start Local Programme) represented a gateway to a range of services provided to families in need (covering health, child welfare, employment, child care, community development). At the time of the Review, Hungary, a peer country, had implemented a version of the SSLP on a pilot basis from 2004. This **programme** – which originated from a co-operation between the English Embassy in Hungary and the Hungarian Ministry of Youth, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunity – **was modelled on the English example** and as a consequence resembled the SSLP in several of its underlying principles and aspirations.

A third illustration is **The Netherlands (in SE 2007)**. The aim of the 2007 Swedish Peer Review on 'freedom of choice and dignity for the elderly' was to present and discuss the main elements of the approach of the new Swedish government towards long-term care for the elderly. With reference to the **long-term care sector**, several studies underline the **similarities between Sweden and the Netherlands.** Furthermore, the Dutch participants in the Peer Review highlighted that they considered the Swedish Long-Term Care (LTC) design similar to theirs. Sweden and the Netherlands share overall policy goals of long-term care, namely universal access based on needs, a guarantee of financial security and good housing, as well as the right to receive social support and health care. Moreover, the policy outputs in both countries are very similar (medium demand for care, low provision of informal care and high provision of formal care). However, as also underlined by the Dutch delegation that attended the Peer Review, some differences between the two countries exist in terms of policy inputs, notably concerning financial instruments, management and governance forms.

Many policy priorities in the **UK** were also **similar to those discussed in the Irish Peer Review (IE 2007).** This includes the priority given to reducing child poverty, increasing access to the labour market, tackling discrimination, etc. Furthermore, the UK Comment Paper explained that the Irish SIF has successfully addressed a number of issues which are faced in the UK. The Comment Paper also explained that a Stakeholder Group was being developed which has many similarities with the SIF: this Group is a cross-departmental, cross-government body which also involves NGOs and oversees the development of the NAPInclusion. Finally, the UK explained in its Comment Paper that it intends to use experience gained in the Peer Review to strengthen this Group, while building on the experience of the last seven years within the Social Policy Task Force (SPTF) ([12]). The latter held regular meetings to contribute to the development of the UK NAPInclusion, and over time this collaboration has resulted in a number of outputs, including the (EU funded) Get Heard project (highlighted in the 2007 JRSPSI) ([13]) and Bridging the Policy Gap project (BTPG) ([14]). In other words, it is clear that the Irish SIF and the processes behind it were relevant to the UK.

In the 2009 Norwegian Peer Review on 'developing well-targeted tools for the active inclusion of the most vulnerable groups' **(NO 2009)**, the practice under review was the Norwegian 'Qualification Programme', a programme focused on offering personalized services to people

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Consequently, while a 'social approach' was deemed more appropriate for coping with the social exclusion of Roma in the Czech Republic, a combination of 'social and ethnic approaches' were deemed more appropriate in Slovakia.

12. The SPTF includes the Department for Work and Pensions and various NGOs in the UK.
13. EC (2007b: 59).
14. The BTPG was a 12 month project was funded by the European Commission, with matching funding from the Department for Work and Pensions, the Scottish Government and the City and County of Swansea.

experiencing difficulties in getting employment. The programme is based on a multi-dimensional approach, since possible measures range from confidence-building and work-oriented activities to medical treatment and physical training if necessary. Looking at the peer country, some **programmes or pilot programmes similar to the Norwegian one** in terms of target population, policy approach and implementation arrangements **existed in the United Kingdom** at the time of the Peer Review. Those programmes mainly focussed on the 'hardest to reach' groups, such as adults facing chronic exclusion, drug-users, ex-offenders and the long-term unemployed, and relied on a multi-dimensional approach ([15]). Also, the structures charged with programme implementation (the British *Jobcentre Plus* and the Norwegian *NAV offices*) show some similarities in their level of autonomy and proximity to citizens.

Other Peer Reviews are **notable for the differences between the practice under review and practices existing in the selected peer countries**.

This was the case for **Denmark (in UK 2004).** The practice reviewed during the meeting held in the United Kingdom in 2004 was a specific programme, the 'Rough Sleepers Unit', a body created by the UK government as part of its strategy for eradicating street homelessness in England (especially focused on the London area). At the time of the Peer Review, the situation in the Danish context was very different. First of all, Denmark did not have a national strategy for homelessness yet. Second, although starting from the 1990s the number of rough sleepers in Copenhagen had been increasing, no official programmes for offering services to the rough sleepers existed and, in all of Denmark, merely a few (poorly coordinated) teams working with rough sleepers were active. Moreover, the UK the programme under review was based on quantitative targets for reducing rough sleeping to be reached by precise deadlines. By contrast, in Denmark even the real extent of the problem was not known since no surveys for counting the number of homelessness people and rough sleepers had been conducted ([16]).

Romania participating in BE (2005) is a second illustration**.** The topic of the 2005 Belgian meeting on 'Minimum Income and Social Integration Institutional Arrangements' was the reform of the Belgian minimum income guarantee scheme undertaken through the Law 26 May 2002 concerning the 'Right to Social Integration' (*Droit à l'intégration sociale, DIS*). Compared to the previous legislation, this law introduced several important novelties for Belgium. This mainly concerned the notion of 'social integration' and activation of minimum income beneficiaries, as well as the conditionality of benefits. At the time of the Peer Review, Romania had a minimum income guarantee scheme, introduced through the Law 416/2001. As compared to the Belgian one, the Romanian law demonstrates **some similarities in terms of legislation and policy approach** (e.g. emphasis on activation and conditionality) ([17]) but **particularly strong differences in terms of implementation**. These include limited use of activation measures due to inadequate administrative capacity and financial constraints as well as

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15. Moreover, at the time of the peer review, the UK Department of Work and Pensions was designing an employment support programme for people distant from the labour market, including those with disability and health problems.
16. Much like Denmark, Finland (another Nordic country attending the UK 2004 Peer Review) did not have a national strategy for homelessness at the time. Certainly, from the late 1980s, a number of governmental initiatives aimed at combating homelessness were implemented by Finland. However, these programmes mainly focused on providing additional housing, while the need for better social work and other support was acknowledged only later and was part of the recently established 'Finnish Homeless Strategy'. The latter was discussed in a Peer Review meeting held in Finland in 2010 (http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu/peer-reviews/2010/the-finnish-national-programme-to-reduce-long-term-homelessness).
17. According to the Romanian government representative who attended the Peer Review, some of these similarities are due to the fact that the previous Belgian legislation (the so called *Minimex*) was one of the foreign examples studied by the Romanian legislation in formulating the law 416/2001.

different distribution of responsibilities between levels of government with respect to implementation

The Spanish Peer Review in our sample (**ES 2007**) in which **Bulgaria** participated as a peer country dealt with the 'Multi-Regional Programme to Combat Discrimination', a national programme for combating discrimination run in Spain from 2000 to 2006. The programme, financed through the European Social Fund, introduced two important innovations in the Spanish context. The first was that it was the first nation-wide program exclusively focused on the social and labour market integration of groups encountering special difficulties to access to the labour market. The second was that for the first time a group of NGOs was involved not only in the implementation of the programme but also in its management. Concerning the selected peer country, at the time of the Peer Review Bulgaria was participating for the first time in the activities of the ESF through the 'Human Resources Development Operational Programme 2007-2013' (HRD OP). The management authority of the HRD OP was the Bulgarian 'European Funds, International Programmes, and Projects' Directorate General within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy which had the power to delegate certain tasks to intermediate *government* agencies (employment agencies, social assistance agencies, Ministry of Education and Science). Since both the Spanish and Bulgarian programmes encompass a variety of policy initiatives, it is particularly difficult to assess how much the two practices can be considered similar or dissimilar. However, considering that one of the main features of the Spanish programme is the participation of the NGOs in the management of the programme (which is not foreseen in the Bulgarian case), we find more dissimilarities than commonalities between the Spanish and Bulgarian programmes.

Belgium participated in the Slovakian Peer Review (**SK 2008**) on 'Social Impact Assessment'. The host country's practice under review, the Slovakian 'Joint Methodology for Impact Assessment', served as a starting point for a wider discussion about Member States' experiences concerning the topic and about the requirements of a good social impact assessment methodology. While the Slovakian 'Joint Methodology' was approved by the Parliament in June 2008, ex ante impact assessment systems containing a social impact component already existed in Belgium in the period before the Peer Review. A 'Sustainability Impact Assessment' (SIA) system had existed at the Federal level since 2004, and in Flanders a 'Regulatory Impact Assessment' system (RIA) had existed since 2005. Both systems aimed at simultaneously assessing economic, environmental and social impacts. **Comparing the Slovakian practice with the Belgian ones, two important differences emerge**. Firstly, in Slovakia the practice is highly centralized, while in Belgium the assessments are decentralized and very diverse, with different methodologies used by the different levels of government. Secondly, the role of the stakeholders and the procedures for consulting them are very different.

Finally, the German Peer Review (**DE 2010**) on 'achieving quality long-term care in residential facilities', in which **Austria participated**, focused on discussions concerning specific elements of the German reform of the long-term insurance branch passed in 2008, notably the concept of 'quality in long term-care' and its measurement. Concerning the sector of long-term care in general, some differences emerge between the German and the Austrian systems. Firstly, in contrast with the German system, the Austrian long-term care allowance system is entirely tax-funded and linked to pensions rather than to health insurance. Secondly, compared to Germany, Austria has a strong tradition of informal care that finds expression in the large proportion of persons in need of care (80 %) being cared for by family members at home. Third, in contrast to Germany, no legal entitlement to benefits in kind exists in Austria. When it comes to the specific topic of the Peer Review, i.e. 'how to assure quality in long-term care in residential facilities', it is important to note that the host country presented two different practices concerning quality

management assessment, i.e. the Federal and Bavarian ones ([18]), based on different audit criteria. In Austria, quality assurance in residential facilities is carried out internally by the facility providers themselves and externally by three institutions located – as in Germany – at different territorial levels. Concerning the audit criteria used for assessing the quality of long-term care, the Austrian approach seems to be closer to the Bavarian approach (based on dialogue and positive incentives rather than standardized questionnaires and threats) than to the Federal one.

Table 5 shows that, taken together, our sample includes five cases in which the selected peer countries' practices share important **similarities** with the host countries' practices discussed during the Peer Review: Slovakia in CZ 2005, Hungary in UK 2006, United Kingdom in IE 2007, The Netherlands in SE 2007, and the United Kingdom in NO 2009. The sample also includes 5 cases in which **differences** between the practices existing in the two countries predominate: Denmark in UK 2004, Romania in BE 2005, Bulgaria in ES 2007, Belgium in SK 2008, and Austria in DE 2010 (see Table 5 below). Note that in two cases those similarities resulted from learning about and transfer of specific programmes between the host and the peer countries that had taken place **prior** to the Peer Review (CZ 2005 and UK 2006), a point to which we turn in section 6.2.

Table 5. Similarities and differences between host and peer countries' practices

Peer Review (Host Country)	Peer Country	Degree of (Dis-) Similarity
CZ 2005	Slovakia	Similar
UK 2006	Hungary	Similar
IE 2007	United Kingdom	Similar
SE 2007	The Netherlands	Rather similar
NO 2009	United Kingdom	Rather similar
UK 2004	Denmark	Dissimilar
BE 2005	Romania	Rather dissimilar
ES 2007	Bulgaria	Rather dissimilar
SK 2008	Belgium	Rather dissimilar
DE 2010	Austria	Rather dissimilar ([19])

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18. In Germany, two structures are responsible for quality management in residential facilities: the first is represented by the health insurance funds which, through their medical services at the local levels (MDK), audits the services and quality of long-term care facilities and outpatient care providers, and controls whether they comply with the federal law and care contracts The second is represented by the supervisory authorities of the *Länder* (in Bavaria, called FQA) which assesses the quality of long-term care facilities, checking compliance with the regional regulations governing residential accommodation. MDK and FQA audits are based on different audit criteria. The former is based on a standardised questionnaires which encompasses indicators for *structure quality* (e.g. interior and facilities, staff, organisation, care concept and hygiene), *process quality* (implementation and evaluation of services) and *outcome quality* (state of health of persons in need of care), in which a special focus is set on outcome quality. The latter adopts a different audit approach (Using the Bavarian Audit Guide) which is not based on a standardised questionnaire and closed questions but that rather tries to gain an unprejudiced understanding of how a facility works by means of observing quotidian key situations (e.g. receiving care and psycho-social support, gathering in common rooms and at mealtimes) (DE 2010).

19. Dissimilar with respect to the federal practice but rather similar to the Bavarian one.

Examining this information about similarities and differences between **practices** on the one hand with host and peer countries' **welfare regime type** on the other, our sample is composed as follows (see table 6):

- Three cases in which host and peer countries are **similar** both in terms of the welfare regimes they belong to *and* in terms of existing practices (top left cell in Table 6): Slovakia (in CZ 2005), The Netherlands (in SE 2007) and the United Kingdom (in IE 2007);
- Four cases in which the host and the peer countries are **different** both in terms of the welfare regimes to which they belong and of the reviewed practices (bottom right in Table 6): Denmark (in UK 2004), Romania (in BE 2005), Bulgaria (in ES 2007), Belgium (in SK 2008).

Interestingly, there are also (highlighted in Table 6):

- Two cases in which the host and the peer countries, though belonging to *different welfare regimes*, demonstrate important *similarities* concerning the actual *practice* reviewed: Hungary (in UK 2006) and the United Kingdom (in NO 2009); and
- One case where, although the peer and host country belong to the *same welfare regime*, they developed rather *different practices* concerning the topic of the Peer Review: Austria (in DE 2010).

The latter three cases are a first indication that any discussion about "**learning between countries belonging to the same welfare regime**" **should be nuanced in that the actual practices that are reviewed should receive careful consideration.**

Table 6. Welfare regime versus reviewed practices: similarities and differences between host and peer countries (the latter are in brackets in the table)

	Rather Similar Practices Reviewed	Rather Dissimilar Practices Reviewed
Same Welfare Regime (Host and Peer)	Slovakia (in CZ 2005) The Netherlands (in SE 2007) United Kingdom (in IE 2007)	Austria (in DE 2010)
Different Welfare Regime (Host and Peer)	Hungary (in UK 2006) United Kingdom (in NO 2009)	Denmark (in UK 2004) Romania (in BE 2005) Bulgaria (in ES 2007) Belgium (in SK 2008)

2.4 Changes in peer countries' practices after the Peer Review

The previous section illustrated the situation of the peer countries in relation to the practices discussed during the meeting (as it was at the time of the Peer Review). In this section, we examine whether peer countries' reviewed practices changed after the PR. At this stage, we are *not making any causal claims* about the relationship between such changes and the participation in the PROGRESS Peer Review. Unsurprisingly, some changes have occurred in all of our case studies (i.e. in all of the studied peer countries), although **the importance of changes vary significantly, ranging from small (incremental) adjustments to major reforms**. Some examples illustrate this point.

In **Denmark** (in UK 2004), a reform in force since 1st January 2007 compels Danish municipalities to formulate policies for the most vulnerable groups, including homeless people

([20]). In 2007, the first survey on homeless people living in Denmark was conducted (two further surveys were conducted in 2009 and 2011).

In **Slovakia** (in CZ 2005), the Slovak government had only recently started to use field social work on larger scale as an instrument for dealing with socially excluded communities. It started by supporting the activity of NGOs such as the Association of Field Social Workers, and in 2012 launched its own project to promote field social work in numerous municipalities. This project, 'Social Field Work in Municipalities'*,* provides support for municipalities in carrying out social field work in the whole of Slovakia by direct reimbursement of salaries of social field workers and their assistants employed by the municipalities. While the support for NGOs was entirely financed through the national budget, this new project and others concerning field social workers are now co-financed through Structural Funds.

In **Romania** (in BE 2005), legislation concerning minimum income guarantees, and social assistance in general underwent several changes in the period after the Belgian Peer Review. Changes introduced through laws 115/2006, 51/2008, 276/2010 and some 'Emergency Ordinances' mainly concerned the governance of the system, aiming at correcting some deficiencies in its implementation (e.g. better definition of eligibility criteria, rules for conducting social inquires, creation of national and county agencies for social benefits). According to the Romanian National Reform Strategy for the period 2011-2013 ([21]), a comprehensive reform of the social assistance system will be undertaken in the years ahead. The aim of this reform is to harmonize the eligibility criteria for all programmes dedicated to low-income families and to bring them together in a single programme up to the year 2013. The Programme is to be called the *Minimum Insertion Income*, and it is to be paid by the National Agency for Social Benefits.

Hungary (in UK 2006), at the time of the Peer Review, was implementing a version of the 'Sure Start Local Programme' on a pilot basis in some of the poorest areas of the country. Once the pilot period ended, the guaranteed funding stopped and the rolling out of the 'Sure Start Programme' (essentially 'Children's Houses') depended on whether municipalities chose to fund local programmes in their areas or not. In this phase, between 2006 and 2007, some 50 more Sure Start Programmes were set up in Hungary. However, due to the lack of central funding, little central guidance, and strong variation in resources and priorities, the actual operation of the Sure Start Programme varied widely between municipalities. From 2007 the programme was re-configured using EU funds. This was the period when the National Strategy entitled 'Let it be Better for the Children!' for the period 2007–2032 (!) was introduced along with the government action plan for the period of 2007-2010 relating to the Strategy. Moreover, at the time of the Peer Review, consultations were underway for a three year 'National Programme against Child Poverty'.

At the time of the Peer Review, **The Netherlands** (in SE 2007) were starting to implement the 'Social Support Act' (WMO), an organisational reform of the Dutch long-term care sector that came into force a few months before the Swedish PROGRESS meeting. Following this reform, the responsibilities of Dutch municipalities in the long-term care sectors increased. Indeed, local authorities became responsible for the organisation of domestic care, for subsidizing forms of

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20. This provision was part of a wider administrative reform. The fact that the obligation to formulate programmes does not concern only homeless people but also other groups (such as drug abusers, prostitutes) is in line with the Danish program for marginalised groups, 'Our Common Responsibility', which was adopted in 2002 and was the topic of a Peer Review held in 2005 (http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu/peer-reviews/2005/preventing-and-tackling-homelessness)

21. Government of Romania (2011), *National Reform Programme (2011-2013)* http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nrp/nrp_romania_en.pdf

support for care-givers that used to be included in the long-term care insurance AWBZ ([22]), and for the support to volunteers. In 2008, the parties involved in the LTC sector published a set of performance indicators for good care concerning the technical quality of care and those representing the experiences of clients. These indicators employ a holistic approach in capturing quality of life, rather than 'just' the quality of care, which represents an important paradigm shift. More recent changes have been aimed at reducing expenditures in the sector ([23]).

In the **United Kingdom** (in IE 2007), the Scottish Government's published, in May 2008, the "Evidence Participation Change" (EPiC) Business Plan as a follow-up of the (EU funded) *Get Heard* project. The latter was designed to feed in the views and experiences of people living in poverty into the development of the 2006-2008 NAPInclusion. While *Get Heard* was seen as a very useful and engaging process (incl. through a vast amount of workshops around Scotland), it was envisaged as something that would only last for a specific period of time. The EPiC Business Plan was precisely developed with a view to moving from a one-off consultation to an on-going dialogue: this would include informing and engaging community organisations affected by poverty as well as enabling them to influence Scottish Government policy (Poverty Alliance, 2008a). The First meeting of the Scottish "Tackling Poverty Stakeholder Forum", composed of (40) community activists, voluntary organisations, (local and central) civil servants and people experiencing poverty, was held in September 2009, as one of two dialogue groups of the Evidence Participation Change project. The Stakeholder Forum (funded by the Big Lottery) meets twice a year and its role is to assess Scottish antipoverty framework while ideally feeding into other parts of government policy.

In **Belgium** (in SK 2008), Council of Ministers approved in July 2008 a 'Poverty Reduction Plan' containing 59 specific measures among which to give more visibility to poverty within the federal Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA). At the time of the Slovakian Peer Review (November 2011), Belgium was searching for practical ways to implement these measures. An innovation introduced at the federal level in the period after the Peer Review meeting was the obligation of including, in the context of the SIA, a 'Quick Scan' test for every government decision submitted to the Council of Ministers. The Quick Scan impact matrix distinguishes the following possible social impacts: equal opportunities, poverty and social inequality, consumer protection, volume of employment and unemployment, quality of employment, quality of health care, general health status, availability of quality housing, general level of education, as well as access to civil, political and social rights. At the regional level, since January 2009, the Flemish region has integrated a 'Youth Impact Assessment' (JOKE) in its regulatory impact assessment system.

At the time of the Peer Review, the **United Kingdom's** (in NO 2009) Department for Work and Pensions was studying measures for employment supports for people distant from the labour market, including those with disability and health problems. However, as a consequence of the 2010 Parliamentary elections, most of the British programmes relying on a policy approach similar to the Norwegian one (see section 2.3) expired, were cancelled, or were rolled up into the so called *Work Programme*, introduced in summer 2011 by the new Conservative-Liberal

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22. AWBZ: Algemene Wet Bijzondere Ziektekosten/Exceptional Medical Expenses Act.
23. According to the latest government proposal (adopted in January 2012), the AWBZ entitlements should be available only to the most vulnerable persons and cover the most necessary services. As a consequence, the current use of personal budgets (i.e. the cash benefits) should be abolished or substantially limited. It is interesting to note that the so-called 'personal budget' was presented during the Peer Review as a Dutch good practice and drew the attention of the host country representatives.

Democrat government ([24]). Moreover, the executive agency *Jobcentre Plus* ceased to exist in October 2011. Since then, services previously provided by this agency have been offered directly by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) ([25]).

In sum, the ten case studies in our sample allow us to discern differences (if any) in learning opportunities, firstly between EU15 (six countries in our sample) and EU 12 Member States (four in our sample); and secondly, between host and the peer countries belonging to 'similar' and 'dissimilar' welfare regimes (in four of our cases the host and selected peer country belong to the same welfare regime, in six cases they belong to different clusters). Our sample includes five cases in which the selected peer countries' practices share important similarities with the host countries' practices discussed during the Peer Review; and an equal amount of cases in which differences between the practices existing in the two countries predominate. Importantly, the existence of cases where the host and the peer countries, though belonging to *different* welfare regimes, demonstrate important *similarities* in the reviewed practices (and vice versa), reminds us that an examination of whether policy learning is more efficient between "similar" countries should be nuanced. Indeed, actual practices should be taken into consideration. Unsurprisingly many of the examined practices changed after the Peer Reviews, but with significant variation, ranging from small (incremental) adjustments to major reforms. The question of whether these changes are in any way linked to the PROGRESS meetings brings us to the heart of the matter, and to the next section.

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24. The *Work Programme* targets the population closer to the labour market and funds only the employment outcomes. The attention to people facing chronicle exclusion is significantly lower than before 2010.
25. The *Jobcentre Plus* continues functioning as part of the Department for Work and Pensions rather than a separate entity. However, the title of the offices was not changed.

⬤ 3. FEATURES OF THE PEER COUNTRIES' PARTICIPATION IN THE MEETINGS

3.1 Peer countries' delegations

In 8 of 10 cases, the delegation of the peer countries considered for this analysis was composed of two members, a peer country official representative (PCO) and a peer country independent expert (PCIE). The two exceptions are the Belgian delegation which attended the 2008 Slovakian Peer Review, composed of one official representative, and the Dutch delegation which attended the 2007 Swedish meeting, composed of one national expert and two official representatives.

Looking at the institutions from which the peer countries' representatives come, it emerges that all the PCOs worked in national Ministries with responsibilities for the policy sector of the practice under review (so, in the central administration). Concerning the PCIEs, in 5 cases they came from academic or research institutes (RO in BE 2005, HU in UK 2006, BG in ES 2007, NL in SE 2007, UK in NO 2009), in 4 cases they were from stakeholders' organizations, mainly NGOs (DK in UK 2004, SK in CZ 2005, UK in IE 2007, AT in DE 2010).

In most cases, **peer countries' representatives can be considered as the 'right persons' for attending the meetings**, since they had a knowledge of the topic and a role in national organisations that allowed them to contribute to discussions during the meeting and diffuse information to relevant national decision-making venues if they wished to do so. Whether civil servants are in the end capable of influencing national policies is an open question, since the key decisions are normally taken by the elected politicians.

Some examples illustrate the point that the right people seem to be doing the learning, at least in our selected cases ([26]). The Danish independent expert **(in UK 2004)** was a leading expert on street homelessness in Denmark and the PCO was the head of the unit dealing with homelessness at Danish Ministry of Social Affairs. The Romanian expert **(in BE 2005)** was a researcher with a good knowledge of the Romanian MIG scheme. She collaborated several times with the Ministry of Labour on both the design and the evaluation of the systems concerned. The Romanian official representative, "*chosen for attending the Peer Review by the persons at the highest level of the hierarchy of the Ministry*" **(BE 2005)**, had been involved in the design of the Romanian minimum income guarantee scheme.

The Hungarian independent expert **(in UK 2006)** was closely involved with child care and the 'Sure Start' in Hungary. She was prominent in the move to implement 'Sure Start' in Hungary and earlier had made a site visit to the UK to view some SSLP programmes in operation as part of a delegation sent to the country when the 'Sure Start' was being set up in Hungary. The Bulgarian PCO **(in ES 2007)** – a senior expert at the Social Protection and Social Integration Directorate of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy – was appointed by the Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Policy. She had a sound knowledge of social inclusion and was able to make a clear link between social inclusion policies and EU funding as a tool for implementing these policies. On the other hand, the national expert was chosen for his expertise on the NGO sector and their role in social inclusion.

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26. These examples are drawn from those national reports in which opinions about the expertise and the roles of peer countries' representatives have been confirmed by other participants in the Peer Review or interviewees that had not attended the meetings. In some of the reports, this information is not available.

Positive opinions about all three representatives of the Dutch delegation **(in SE 2007)** concerning their expertise and their roles in their country have been voiced. The same was true in **IE (2007)** as regards the UK participants, who were seen as being very active and very knowledgeable op the topic of the meeting: the PCO was a high-level civil servant in the DWP, the other the Director of the Scottish Poverty Alliance. Belgium sent a deputy Head of Cabinet (advisor to the Minister for Social Integration) to this PR, accompanied by the responsible person in the Service for the Fight against Poverty, Insecurity and Social Exclusion. The British PCO **(in NO 2009)** who attended the Peer Review belonged to the 'Analysis, Disability and Work' Division of the Department for Work and Pensions. At the time of the Peer Review, that Department was studying employment supports for people distant from the labour market, including those with disabilities and health problems. The British independent expert was collaborating with the British government on a plan to bring people distant from the labour market, including individuals with disability and health problems, nearer to the labour market. The Austrian PCIE participating in **DE (2010)** was one of the key national experts in the field of long-term care. In the past, he collaborated with the Austrian Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, most notably in developing the 'European quality management system for residential facilities' (E-Qalin) [27].

Note that in Deliverable 3 (OSE and PPMI, 2012a) we concluded that many critical voices were raised by Peer Review participants regarding the great variation in the quality of the Comment Papers. While this seems to contradict the finding that peer countries in our sample are represented at a rather high level, this apparent contradiction may be the result of our case selection. Indeed, in selecting peer countries for the case studies, we mainly focused on countries that demonstrated a *significant interest* in the topic of the Peer Review. Consequently, it is likely that those countries were particularly thorough in choosing their representatives, which is not the case for all Peer countries. In fact, in some of our shadow cases the composition and motivation of the peer country delegation was called into question. Thus, in IE (2007) one of the peer country delegates was an external consultant whose main motivation was to secure future assignments with the Ministry, and who was of the opinion that Spain participated in this Peer review "*so as to be a good European*"; in several cases participants remained silent due to a poor knowledge of the English language.

Our analysis did not detect major problems concerning the collaboration among peer countries' official representatives and peer country independent experts prior to the meeting. Often one or more preparatory meetings were organised before the Peer Review, especially in order to prepare the peer country Comment Paper. In the case of Hungary (in IE 2007), the Comment Paper was the first document written jointly between the government official and EAPN Hungary, which was seen by both parties as very positive experience that further strengthened the relationship.

Concerning the attitude of the selected peer country delegations in our sample, our analysis confirms [28] that in many cases they were among the most active participants in their respective Peer Review meetings. This is especially true of the Danish participants in UK 2004, Dutch participants in SE 2007, UK participants both in IE 2007 and NO 2009, and Austrian participants in Germany 2010. The exceptions are the Romanian PCO attending the 2005

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27. 'E-Qalin' is a quality management system for residential facilities developed by organisations from seven countries (Austria, Germany, Slovenia, Italy, Luxembourg, Czech Republic and the Netherlands): it is increasingly used to enhance quality of long-term care in residential facilities.
28. This activism from the selected peer countries is unsurprising in view of the selection criteria we applied. See Section 1.

Belgian meeting, the Bulgarian delegation attending the 2007 Spanish meeting and the Belgian PCO attending the 2008 Slovakian meeting ([29]).

3.2 Peer countries' prior expectations, topics of interests and satisfaction about the PR

Experts working on the case studies asked peer countries' representatives about their expectations prior to attend the meetings. By way of illustration, we report some of their answers in Box 1 ([30]).

Box 1. Expectations prior to Progress Peer Reviews as expressed by former participants (drawn for interviews)
"*It was important for me to meet other people who know [so] much about homelessness and are strong experts [...] I was hungry for such specialist meetings*" (DK PCIE, in UK 2004). "*My expectations were to get an opportunity to share knowledge and to get helpful advice to formulate a new Danish policy towards homelessness*" (DK PCO, UK 2004).   - According to the case study report Slovakia was interested in participating in the PR on Roma inclusion (CZ 2005) as it was an opportunity to learn from the experience of other countries and to share their own field experience.   "*Learning was my most important expectation from the participation in that meeting and I can say that it was fulfilled. I have learnt [and] I have seen what can be done. When I returned to Romania, I analysed the possibility to do something similar*" (RO PCO, in BE 2005).   "*[My] expectations were clearly to learn more from the Spanish experience and to understand how to combine different policies in practice and how to provide specific and tailor-made services to vulnerable groups*" (BG PCO, in ES 2007).   - According to the national case study (UK 2006), the Hungarian independent expert was anxious to get more information on the protracted experience of the UK, given that at the time of the Peer Review, Sure Start had reached something of an impasse in Hungary. For her the main issues of interest were the model itself, how it develops over time and how it can be sustained (HU PCIE, in UK 2006).   "*For me OMC means to cooperate with European colleagues and the PR is a natural way to implement the OMC in practice, you can talk about the OMC but this is acting upon the OMC*" (PCO NL, in SE 2007).   - According to the Norwegian case study (NO 2009), the reasons why the UK decided to

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29. In the case of the Romanian PCO who attended the 2008 Belgian meeting, it is interesting to note that, in her opinion, the role of PCOs during the Peer Review should be primarily to listen to the others for the purpose of gaining information to improve national policies. In the case of the Peer Review held in Slovakia, many references to the Belgian situation were made not by the Belgian PCO but by the thematic expert (who was a Belgian academic). However, when one considers the different level of participation by peer countries' delegations, the importance of the linguistic problems, already discussed in Deliverable 3, must not be underestimated (OSE and PPMI, 2012a).

30. The text in italics refers to statements made by the participants, while the text in normal font refers to experts' synthesis/elaboration on answers received by the interviewees.

> attend the Peer Review were twofold. On the one hand, it was seen as an occasion to learn more about the Norwegian approach and "*to feed in the policy thinking at the Department of Welfare and Pensions*" (UK PCO, in NO 2009). But they also wanted to share their experience and lessons learned from the programmes in the UK.
>
> • The IE (2007) UK participants expressed high expectations about the PR in their Comment Paper. The Scottish representative explained that he "*went to the PR with a view to understand 'how do we develop a large scale participatory process at national level'*". Note that the Spanish participant to this PR explained that she was very sceptical and wanted to see participation of people living in poverty with her own eyes, as she expected it "*would be like putting these people in a zoo*".
>
> • According to the German case study, both Austrian experts went to the DE 2010 PR as "learners" in the sense that they hoped to get both a sense of what other countries were doing and with the hope to draw some specific lessons that can be utilized in Austria's current quality assurance system (DE 2010).

Three main conclusions arise from these selected quotes, which are largely corroborated by the Comment Papers and the analysis of the wider set of interviews.

First, in some cases the **expectation from participants before the PR was** mainly to **learn *from* others.** In the other cases the main expectation was clearly to *exchange* ideas and experience between participants, that is, **learning *with* others** (DK in UK 2004, SK in CZ 2005, UK in NO 2009 and UK in IE 2007). Or, as one peer country official put it: a PR "*is a real dialogue that goes beyond mutual admiration. When A PR works, you really develop a shared analysis of the reviewed practice*" (IE 2007). This is consistent with the *immediate and impact evaluations* of the Peer Reviews, which show that across all PROGRESS Peer Reviews learning directions are rather diverse (many countries can be considered as *learners* and as *tutors,* see literature review in Annex 2).

Second, it emerges that in most cases peer country participants have a **very clear idea about from whom they expect to learn.** Quite unsurprisingly, in some cases (RO in BE 2005, BG in ES 2007, HU in UK 2006, NL in SE 2007, UK in IE 2007, UK in NO 2009) the expectation is clearly to learn **from the host country**. Such an expectation is often linked to pre-existing contacts or exchanges between the host and peer country. This was, for example, the case with Romania (who in drafting its minimum income guarantee scheme had studied the Belgian 'Minimex'), Hungary (whose 'Sure Start Local Programme' was drawn from the English model); the Netherlands (who had contacts with the Swedish organization dealing with LTC before the 2007 Peer Review and considered Sweden as a 'forerunner in some respects'); and finally the English and Scottish officials, who had been in close contact with the Irish host to discuss the issue of involving people living in poverty prior to the Peer Review (IE 2007).

In other cases, the **expectation was to learn from "the other participants"** more generally (DK in UK 2004, SK in CZ 2005, BE in SK 2008, AT in DE 2010). In two the cases participants could not identify a clear tutor in advance (SK 2008 and DE 2010). This was mainly due to the nature of the topic under review and to the peculiar 'driver' behind the choice of organising the Peer Review. Indeed, the aim of the 2008 Slovakian meeting was to launch a 'European debate' on the topic of 'Social Impact Assessment'. The aim was to identify and discuss the criteria for a 'good' social impact assessment methodology and the starting point was that none of the participating countries had a 'best practice', especially the host country. Similarly, the topic of the 2010 German Peer Review, quality management systems in long-term care facilities, was so new and complex that it was impossible to identify the country with the 'best' practice.

Thirdly, in virtually all the cases, the expectation of peer countries' representatives is not simply to learn "something" about the practices under review in general, but to **draw specific lessons for improving national practices** ([31]) **and feeding national debates**. This is particularly evident in those cases in which changes in national practices were underway at the time of the Peer Review (RO in BE 2005, HU in UK 2006, NL in SE 2007, UK in IE 2007, BE in SK 2008, UK in NO 2009) ([32]). In this sense, it can be said that **peer countries' participation** (at least in our sample) **is often 'problem-driven'**. That is, they attend the meeting having in mind challenges faced in the national context and hope to find at least some concrete remedies. In other cases, the link with the national context is much looser. Indeed, one of the Spanish participants in IE (2007) did not believe that stakeholder involvement in social inclusion policies could work in practice, because of the assumed communication problems with people experiencing poverty (an opinion which changed quite radically through the PR); let alone that they envisaged that they would be able to implement a SIF-like event in Spain (an opinion that was confirmed through the PR).

A fourth conclusion is that *virtually all* of the peer countries' representatives found that nearly all topics in which they were interested prior to the Peer Review were ultimately addressed during the meeting. Unsurprisingly, peer country representatives often explain that **their prior expectations were met and that they are generally satisfied with the quality of the Peer Review**. The high degree of satisfaction among the peer countries' representatives is indeed a general finding emerging from most of the ten case studies. Note that the *immediate and impact evaluations* of the Peer Reviews show that *overall* many peer reviews received very positive evaluations regarding the usefulness of the outcomes (see PPMI and OSE, 2011a: Figure 13 and 14). And yet, one important point of frustration was aired by several representatives of **Central and Eastern European Member States, who more often define themselves as 'learners' and sometimes feel quite uncomfortable about this**. One Hungarian participant said that "*I had the feeling that people from Western European countries were treating us like students who don't know anything… That might be one reason why I did not step into the discussion*" (IE 2007)

In any case, the generally high level of satisfaction does prevent PR participants from making many suggestions to improve the learning potential of the PR programme. For example, the Dutch representatives attending the 2007 Swedish Peer Review claimed that the topic of the meeting was probably too broad and that the aspect of 'dignity' in LTC for the elderly, although mentioned in the title, was underscored during the Peer Review. Several representatives (e.g. Austrian representatives in the 2010 German Peer Review), while satisfied about the quality of the meeting, complained about the lack of time for peer countries' presentations, which is a remark made in several of the cases. The participants in the Irish Peer Review raised the issue of the uneven quality of Comment Papers, which again was a recurring issue. We come back to these and other points in Deliverable 5 (Policy Recommendations).

3.3 Role assumed by the peer countries

The previous section highlighted the fact that in most of our case studies, peer country representatives' main expectation prior to the Peer Review meetings was (quite unsurprisingly) "to learn" (from the host country and/or from other participants). This does not imply that, consequently, those countries *primarily, let alone exclusively* played the role of 'learners' during these PROGRESS meetings. The latter scenario only applied to three countries which indeed mostly acted as 'learners' throughout the Peer Review, namely Romania in BE 2005, Hungary in UK 2006, and Bulgaria in ES 2007.

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31. This attitude seems to be more evident in the answers of PCOs
32. See Section 2.4.

In most cases the **peer countries' attitude *changed* during the meeting, depending on the specific issues under discussion** (we arrived at a similar conclusion as regards the host country representatives in Deliverable 3). More specifically, while some 'tutoring' attitudes can already be identified in the peer countries' Comment Papers produced before the Peer Review, in other cases, such as Belgium in SK 2008 and Austria in DE 2010, those attitudes more often developed during the meeting. That is, **peer country representatives became aware of their own national good practices during the meeting (the *mirror effect*).** The relative merits of their own practice were in a way "discovered" by representatives as a consequence of discussions held and comparisons drawn with other experiences. Some examples illustrate how (7 out of 10 of the) peer countries acted both as 'tutors' and 'learners' ([33]).

Denmark (in UK 2004), according to the national report, tabled a number of questions, especially on governance issues, aiming to learn from the host country's example. However, the Danish delegation also assumed the position of tutor, by suggesting the need to use a 'bottom-up approach to co-ordination' and to ensure users' involvement (both suggestions derived from the Danish approach to the problem), for example. Moreover, both in the Comment Paper and during the discussion, a number of Danish 'good practices' were highlighted. Also, in the 2005 Czech Peer Review (CZ 2005) there is some evidence of a 'dual' position of **Slovakia**. In some cases, Slovakia acted mainly as a 'learner' by identifying aspects of the reviewed programme that were potentially transferable to its domestic context. This was the case with the practice of considering clients as 'human capital' to be developed. In other cases, the assets of its national programme were underlined. For example, discussions highlighted the Slovakian programme's 2 years' time span, which guarantees recipients a better continuity of services as compared to the Czech programme. In other words, Slovakia also acted as a 'tutor'.

The Netherlands (in SE 2007) also acted both as a 'learner' and a 'tutor'. They were particularly interested in learning from the host country on governance issues (i.e. division of responsibilities between the municipality, the county and the state), management (i.e. contracting of LTC-providers by the municipality and the mechanism of customer choice model), and needs assessment (i.e. how are the care-needs evaluated). During this same Peer Review, the Dutch delegation presented their good practices in the areas of support for informal care, quality indicators, and personal budgets, a practice already highlighted in the Dutch comment paper.

The features of the **Belgian participation (in SK 2008**) to the Peer Review on 'Social Impact Assessment' (SIA) are especially significant. As explained in more detail in Deliverable 3 (OSE and PPMI, 2012a), this was a particularly noteworthy Peer Review. The aim was not to study an example of a good practice, but rather to discuss a variety of existing social impact assessment methodologies. There was a broad understanding that none of these practices could have been considered as the 'best one'. Consequently, the goal of the Belgian representative was to learn from the other participants (not only from Member States' representatives, also experts and European Commission officials) about ways to improve Belgium's SIA system. Such learning did indeed take place and Belgium can be considered as a 'learner' on issues linked to 'political capital' ([34]), stakeholder involvement, and ways for keeping the process manageable (the so called 'Quick Scan'). Interestingly, none of these issues corresponded to the previous expectations of the Belgian representative (they were discovered during the Peer Review). More

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33. According to the findings of Deliverable 3, this holds true also for the host countries (OSE and PPMI, 2012a). In fact, although before the meetings they generally perceived themselves as 'tutors', this perception sometimes changed during the meeting with reference to specific issues.

34. "The expression 'political capital' in the context of social impact assessment indicates everything that provides decision makers with the means to act and take decisions (democratic level of the country, the attention of policy makers with regard to social issues, level of participative governance, political willingness for developing SIA)" (Task A report SK 2008: 10).

interesting still, in presenting their experience, the Belgian participants ([35]) realised that their national practice was more advanced than most of the practices presented by the other countries. In this sense, it can be said that during the Peer Review, Belgium discovered that it could also play a 'tutor' role on the issue. Similar results were found in the Irish Peer Review (IE, 2007), where the Belgian representative found first-hand confirmation that they were "*not doing so bad at all*" and that "*beyond all that we have seen about the other practices, it has been a genuine reflection about our own work*".

During the Norwegian PR (NO 2009), the UK representatives assumed the role of both 'tutors' and 'learners'. On the one hand, UK participants were particularly interested in the way the staff of NAV offices work, the coordination among the different bodies involved in the programme, and the role of the recipients. However, the British participants felt like tutors when it comes to issues like the medical re-assessment of programme participants. On this issue, "[the UK was there] *where others have only been starting*" (UK PCO, NO 2009). Consequently, they provided many comments and suggestions during the meeting ([36]). Finally, both **Austrian participants to the German PR (DE 2010)** went to the meeting as "learners", in the sense that they expected to get both a sense of what other countries were doing and with the hope of drawing some specific lessons that could be used in Austria's current quality assurance development. However, listening to the comments of the peer countries and answering questions posed by some of them, Austrian representatives had the opportunity to identify some 'good practices' which seemed to work well in Austria (e.g. reliance on incentives rather than obligation, staff training). In this context, they can be seen as tutors.

In sum, this section showed that, at least for the cases we assessed, peer countries' representatives can be considered as the relevant persons for attending the meetings in view of their key positions in their national organisations. In other words: the right people seem to be doing the learning. However, in some of our shadow cases the composition of the peer country delegation was called into question. Peer countries' representatives mostly expect to *learn from others*, while in several cases the expectation is to *learn with others* (that is, to exchange ideas and experiences). Crucially, peer countries' attitudes often *change during the meeting*, depending on the specific issues under discussion: learners become tutors and vice versa. This is partly explained by the fact that peer country representatives become aware of their own national good practices during the meeting, which we refer to as the *mirror effect.* Peer countries' representatives in a majority of cases explain that they have learned (general or more specific lessons for improving national practices) mainly from the host country practice; but in other cases, the role of other participants was key: other peers, the thematic expert, the EC representative etc. Peer country participation is (at least in our sample) often 'problem-driven': participants look for concrete remedies for challenges in their domestic context. Apparently with positive results, in view of the general satisfaction with the quality of the learning dimension. The questions whether this 'satisfaction' means that there is a concrete impact of the PR in the peer countries will be answered in the next section.

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35. It is interesting to note that for the most part, examples of the Belgian practice were provided by the thematic expert, who was Belgian, rather than by the PCO.
36. When it comes to other peer countries (Poland and Spain) in the Norwegian Peer Review, their roles have been more defined, that is to say, they perceived themselves (and were perceived by the host country) mainly as 'learners'. However, it can be said that, when presenting some features of their national practices, also these countries played in the role of 'tutors'.

⬤ 4. OUTCOMES OF THE PEER REVIEWS IN THE PEER COUNTRIES

It is evident that for all the peer country official representatives (PCOs) and peer country independent expert (PCIEs) involved in the meetings we analysed, Peer Reviews have been a good occasion for **individual learning**. All of them have improved their knowledge about the host countries' practices under review and, to a lesser extent, about the practices of the other participating countries. In some cases, learning also concerned actions and contributions at the EU level in the policy domain in which those practices were inserted, as in SK 2008. In many cases, by comparing the actual implementation of practices in other countries, participants received ideas for improving their own national practices. As illustrated above, the discussion around the national context and the comparison with other contexts resulted in identifying, sometimes unexpectedly, one's own good practices. In all, we can safely conclude that national delegates learned a lot, as individuals, from their participation in the PROGRESS Peer Reviews. To some extent, however, the absence of such individual learning effects would of course have been the more surprising finding.

However, some key questions arise here, namely how much of this knowledge acquired by these *individuals* was **diffused** in their home countries and how did this diffusion occur? Has this *individual* learning been translated into organisational learning in any way? What have been the outcomes of those learning experiences in the peer countries? We will try to answer these questions by providing some examples drawn from our case studies and organise these along four types of outcomes: networking, cognitive effects, discursive diffusion, and policy transfer.

4.1 Networking

For the Danish PCIE, the **UK (2004)** Peer Review represented an occasion to develop "a whole new homelessness-network". An important outcome of the PR in Sweden **(SE 2007)** was the establishment of a network between the Dutch participants and other actors who attended the Peer Review, namely the host country delegation and the thematic expert. This networking brought about an enhanced cooperation between the Dutch and the Swedish administrations, especially in the form of visits in the respective countries organised after the Peer Review ([37]).

For one event ('The aspects of poverty in the Sustainability Impact Assessment', organised in Brussels in September 2009), the Belgian authorities invited the Irish independent expert who attended the Slovakian Peer Review **(SK 2008)**, thus exploiting a network build in that occasion.

A particularly notable outcome of the German Peer Review **(DE 2010)** has been the creation and reinforcing of networks between the **Austrian delegates** and other participants. In fact, as a result of their contact during the Peer Review, the Austrian PCO invited the German expert who presented the Bavarian system for exchanging information on issues related to staff training. In other case studies, such as IE (2007), the PR was rather the occasion to **reinforce pre-existing networks** (e.g. between the UK and Ireland), or simply providing the opportunity to contact a foreign expert "just in case they need it" (e.g. between Belgium and Hungary, in IE 2007); this was also our finding in Deliverable 3, section 7.3.1).

All in all, it would seem that the networking effect of the PR in our sample is not very strong. This finding is consistent with the more general finding (across all PROGRESS PR) that

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37. See Deliverable 3, OSE and PPMI (2012a), for more details.

secondary data do not provide much evidence of networks being established between the participants of PR meetings in the specific thematic areas, with the exception of homelessness (see: PPMI and OSE, 2011a and Annex 2).

4.2 Cognitive effects: organisational learning

Participation in the Peer Review in **the UK (2004)** produced clear *cognitive effects* - the acquisition of new knowledge by national organizations and institutions - in Denmark. The main learning from the PR concerned four issues, namely developing a national strategy to reduce homelessness, encouraging local authorities to develop local strategies for socially marginalised groups, and using periodic homeless counts to evaluate such strategies. A fourth aspect concerned the awareness that was raised, through the PR, about obtaining external evaluation of national programmes against homelessness. According to the participants, concerning the abovementioned issues, they mostly learned from the host country [38].

Slovakia's participation in the Czech Peer Review (**CZ 2005**) entailed learning about the training of field social workers and the creation of education standards for them, approaches and procedures related to the clients of the programme. It also entailed learning about the advisability of advocacy for mainstreaming the programme and the need for closer cooperation with local authorities, as well as the possibility of using European funds for financing the programme. As can be seen, in this case, learning concerned both procedural and substantive issues. **Romania's** participation in the Belgian PR (**BE 2005**) produced significant cognitive effects. Lessons learned ranged from a better definition of the concept of 'activation' to solutions for coping with territorial differences and coordination problems in implementing minimum income schemes. The value-added for Romania from participating in the Belgian Peer Review was that it **provided Romanian policymakers with a concrete illustration (the Belgian DIS) of how to cope with practical problems** that the country was facing in implementing its legislation. For policy learning purposes, the 2007 Swedish Peer Review **(SE 2007)** was deemed very useful by the Dutch participants. Among the many issues discussed at that PR, one in particular had significant cognitive effects for the Dutch participants and even fed into the national debate in **The Netherlands**. This was the promotion of the governance and management of the long-term care at the local level, i.e. the decentralisation of LTC.

The cognitive effects of the Slovakian PR **(SK 2008)** in **Belgium** were particularly significant. The main expectation of the Belgian participants at the meeting was to learn more about the criteria for building a good social impact assessment methodology. Indeed, information has been acquired concerning the participation of stakeholders in the process, the transparency of the SIA test, the use of data and scientific studies for providing evidence-based analysis, the opportunity to conceptualise SIA as a 'transversal process which needs a transversal approach', ways for tackling limited political support to the process, solutions for 'keeping the process manageable', notably the instrument of the 'Quick Scan'. It is interesting to note that, in contrast with other cases, information was not acquired by looking at the host country's practice, but rather through the discussions held during the Peer Review, to which all the peer countries as well as other actors such as the thematic expert and the EC representative actively contributed.

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38. According to the national report (UK 2004) some cognitive consequences developed in Finland as well. They concerned the need to set clear targets, the role of the central government (which is very active in the UK), and the usefulness of outreach teams (such as the English 'Contact and Assessment teams'). Indeed, concerning the latter aspect, a pilot programme was launched in Helsinki, and in 2008 a law obliging municipalities to do outreach work in order to get in touch with at-risk young people came into force. However, we have no convincing evidence of a link between the Peer Review and these developments. What can be said is that the participation to the English Peer Review motivated the Finnish government representative to plan (host) a Peer Review meeting in Finland, which took place in 2010.

Participation in the 2010 German Peer Review **(DE 2010)** produced some cognitive effects **among Austrian participants**. Firstly, it created awareness on what other countries are doing, or planning to do, with regards to quality assurance in residential facilities. Secondly, it offered the opportunity to learn about what can be done to improve specific aspects of long term care, such as staff training. Having participated in the 2007 Social Inclusion Forum in Ireland (the site visit of the **IE 2007 PR**), the UK (esp. Scottish) administration learned lessons on what does work in terms of stakeholder organisation, but as importantly on how not to do it. As one official explained: "the SIF felt like a conference and not like a forum. The SIF might be a bit les participatory than what the Irish pretend, explained and expected. So the UK tried to create a process and not just a series of events. We have learned from the SIF" (IE 2007).

4.3 Discursive diffusion: using lessons learned in domestic debates

There is some evidence that the lessons learned during UK (2004) PR **have been diffused in the organisations of the Danish participants** and used more widely in discussions concerning homelessness policy. This holds especially true for three issues: encouraging local authorities to develop local strategies for socially marginalised groups, the importance of obtaining external evaluation of one's policies ([39]) (an issue hotly debated at the Ministerial level), and finally, the usefulness of measuring homelessness to increase the pressure to address it (which was especially important to the NGO from which the PCIE came). Also, there is **evidence in the Slovakian case of discursive diffusion**. Indeed, knowledge acquired during the **Czech PR in (2005)** was disseminated, especially among Slovak NGOs. This helped them to sharpen their arguments in subsequent deliberations with the Slovakian government and its agencies.

Lessons learned by **Romania in BE (2005)** were diffused in the Romanian context, namely within the Romanian Ministry of Labour, both at the administrative and political levels, and used in these settings for discussions around the topic. However, we found no evidence that elements of the Belgian model have been transferred to Romania. We have found convincing evidence that knowledge acquired during the Peer Review in Slovakia **(SK 2008)** has been widely diffused in Belgium and used by actors to frame the policy discourse. For example, this information was subsequently used in a round table on 'the aspects of poverty in the Sustainability Impact Assessment', organised in Brussels in September 2009, by the Belgian EU Presidency in the second half of 2010 (under which social impact assessment was considered a priority), and in a Peer Review on 'developing effective ex-ante social impact assessment with a focus on methodology, tools and data sources' hosted by Belgium in November 2011.

When asked about the outcomes of the Norwegian PR **(NO 2009)** in their country, both UK participants generally refer to dissemination of information about the Norwegian programme. In fact, a report about the Peer Review meeting was disseminated in the Department of Work and Pensions by the British official. The independent expert also mentioned the programme while talking to British officials and ministers on various occasions.

4.4 Policy transfer: changes in national practices be plausibly linked to the Peer Review

There is evidence that discussions held during the PR in the Czech Republic in 2005 can be linked to a **change in Slovakian policymaking**. At the time of the Peer Review, the Slovakian 'Field Social Work in Socially Excluded Communities' programme was funded entirely from the national budget and the need to find alternative sources was one of the main concerns expressed by the Slovakian delegation during the meeting. The possibility of using European

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39. Denmark hosted a Peer Review on the topic the year after the British Peer Review.

funds (as in the Czech Republic) was discussed and – according to the interviews – was among the most significant ideas that Slovakian representatives brought home from the Peer Review. Since in the following period the Slovakian programme was indeed financed through European funds, a plausible claim can be made that the use of European funds represents a case of policy transfer from the host country to Slovakia.

A specific element, the 'Quick Scan', which was widely discussed during the Slovakian PR **(SK 2008)** was discovered by the Belgian participants and **transferred to the Belgian context**. Some features of the Bavarian staff training model in the quality management system also seem to have been **transferred to Austria** as a result of the German Peer Review (**DE 2010)**. No less than five participating countries found the approach presented in the Irish Peer Review **(IE 2007**) highly relevant to their national contexts. While all of them also mentioned important obstacles and difficulties with a view to policy transfer, the IE 2007 case study report found that The **Scottish "Tackling Poverty Stakeholder Forum"**, held for the first time in September 2009, was **modelled on the Irish Government's Social Inclusion Forum**. The report convincingly shows how this was indeed a legacy from the IE 2007 Peer Review, which is also recognised in Scottish Government's "Evidence Participation Change" (EPiC) Business Plan that launched the Stakeholder Forum.

In all these cases, the **practices that had been transferred were primarily procedural, rather than substantive**: an alternative way for funding an existing national programme (Slovakia in CZ 2005); practical ways of including people experiencing poverty through dedicated *fora* (United Kingdom, in IE 2007); a specific policy device, namely the 'Quick Scan' test (Belgium in SK 2008); and a method for staff training (Austria in DE 2010).

These cases of policy transfer and the mechanisms through which they occur will be discussed in more detail in sections 5.2 and 6.

In sum, we conclude from this section that in some cases peer countries' representatives have somewhat reinforced existing **networks**, and sometimes created new ones with other PR participants. While the networking effect is not very strong, in a few cases (e.g. Belgium in SK 2008, Spain in IE 2007 and Austria in DE 2010), this network has been used to invite foreign experts to their own countries, thus contributing to the domestic debate. In many cases the learning taking place during the PROGRESS Peer Reviews was not limited to the individual participants: it has to some extent trickled down in peer countries' domestic organisations, producing cognitive effects. This is to say that the PR increased organisational knowledge of what other countries are doing, increased awareness of the strengths and weakness of one's own national practices, and that examples of good practices inspired improvements in other peer countries. Lessons learned concerned both the procedural and substantive aspects of practices discussed during the PR. In some cases, this knowledge has been used in discourses developed at the domestic level, thus influencing the national debate through discursive diffusion. However, it should be acknowledged that, apart from one exception (Belgium in SK 2008), cognitive effects and discursive diffusion were generally limited to national representatives' organisations of origin. As explained in Section 3.1, this mainly concerns national Ministries for the Peer country official representative, and stakeholders' organisations as well as academic and research institutes for the Peer country independent experts. As we will see in section 5.1 below, this limitation is in part because peer countries have no systematic strategies for disseminating information concerning the Peer Reviews. Finally, the transfer of practices is plausible in four (out of ten) case studies: this happened on procedural, rather than substantive issues. The question through which mechanisms dissemination and transfer occurs is the subject of the next section.

⭕ 5. RETURNING HOME: DISSEMINATION AND MECHANISMS FOR CHANGE

5.1 Dissemination strategies

How has information about the Peer Review meetings been disseminated in peer countries' domestic settings once national representatives returned home? Towards which audiences has this information been targeted? In answering these questions, it is useful to distinguish between peer country official representatives (PCOs) and peer country independent experts (PCIEs).

Firstly, as regards **peer country officials***,* in all our case studies but one (Austria in DE 2010), **information about the PR was diffused through *informal contacts* with colleagues** working in the same Department. In only four cases there is evidence that this was accompanied by a *written report* on the Peer Review, specifically:

- The Romanian PCO who attended the 2005 Belgian meeting wrote a report that was forwarded in the Ministry of Labour.
- The Bulgarian PCO who attended the 2007 Spanish meeting wrote a report in collaboration with the national expert. This report was forwarded to the different organizations concerned by the issues debated during the Peer Review and, at the political level, to the Minister and the Deputy Minister in charge of social inclusion ([40]).
- A report written by the English PCO who attended the 2009 Norwegian Peer Review was circulated in the Department of Work and Pensions ([41]).
- After the Irish Peer review (IE 2007), the representative from England disseminated papers within his (small) Social Inclusion team, for obvious reasons: "*European processes are not seen as particularly sexy in the DWP in the UK… and there not much engagement with what this European team is doing… so I sent the reports to those people I gathered would read them*" (IE 2007). The Scottish participant (representing EAPN) disseminated papers among his colleagues at the Poverty Alliance, but not beyond that.

Significantly, **in *one case* only** (Romania in BE 2005) **a meeting for providing feedback about the results of the Peer Review was organised.** This meeting involved the staff of the Department of the PCO and the national expert. In *none of our case studies* was information about the Peer Review disseminated by the PCOs outside their Ministry, Department or even their Unit ([42]). In other words, information generally does not reach the lower levels of government (even those often charged with the implementation of national policies) ([43]), except if they retrieve the (elaborate) documentation from the PR website.

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40. As reported by the PCO, this is a normal procedure to be followed for each travel/meeting abroad.
41. A report on the NO 2009 meeting was also prepared by the Polish and Spanish PCOs. However, it does not appear that this information was spread outside the respective ministries.
42. The only exception is Belgium in the Slovakian 2008 Peer Review. In that case, information about the meeting was disseminated outside the Federal Ministry under peculiar circumstances (and the PCO had no role in this dissemination) which we will examine in the next Section.
43. As mentioned in the Norwegian case study (NO 2009), generally Polish PCOs attending Peer Reviews draft reports summarizing the main points of the Peer Review and indicating the relative regional or local bodies which might be interested in this information. However, our finding is that while those reports are always disseminated in the national Ministry, that information rarely reaches the lower levels of government.

Second, as regards peer country **independent experts**, in some cases experts who attended the meetings disseminated information about the Peer Review outside the organisations they belong to. This was the case with the Slovakian PCIE (CZ 2005), whose organisation (an NGO) made extensive use of information gained from the Peer Review in consultation with Slovakian decision-makers at both the national and local levels. The Danish expert, besides disseminating information within his own organisation, reported about the UK 2004 Peer Review in the annual report of the 'Council for the Socially Excluded' and on the *website* of the Project UDENFOR ([44]). At that same PR, the PCIE from the UK passed on knowledge about the Norwegian QuP while talking to various British officials, including former government Ministers. The Hungarian PCIE, again *through informal contacts*, disseminated some information about the British 2006 Peer Review to providers of services under Hungary's 'Sure Start' programme. The Hungarian PCIE in the IE 2007 PR, by contrast, did not disseminate the reports within EAPN Hungary as a result of the language barrier.

In general, when experts attending the Peer Review were academics or researchers, they stated that they used information about the Peer Review in *informal talks* with colleagues and in university lectures or seminars, as with the Finnish expert in UK 2004, for instance. In one case, the Dutch expert who attended the Peer Review wrote an *article* in Dutch and posted it on the website of his organisation.

There are only two cases, for which we have evidence of a wider dissemination strategy in a peer country about a PROGRESS PR meeting. The first is the UK, where after having participated in the Irish PR (IE 2007), Scottish authorities made clear that they drew inspiration from the Irish Social Inclusion Forum, and referred to it (and the PR website) in strategic documents. Deliverable 3 of this assignment describes in detail how the results of this particular PR in Ireland were also widely disseminated at the EU level as well as in the host country.

The second case is Belgium after the 2008 Slovakian Peer Review. This was the result of exceptional circumstances, namely the activism of: a) the EC representative in the Slovakian Peer Review, who was also a Belgian civil servant closely involved in developing SIA tools in Belgium, and who was trying to raise awareness among different actors regarding the importance of having such a tool in Belgium, and b) of the Thematic expert of the Peer Review, who was a Belgian academic. Three events raised awareness about the issues discussed at the Slovakian PR among a wider public of Belgian actors (civil servants of the central administration, officials from the regional and community levels, experts), specifically:

- An expert roundtable on 'the aspect of poverty in the Sustainability Impact Assessment' organised on September 2009 by the Federal Administration for Social Integration and Anti-Poverty Policy. Among the participants at the round table were two Belgian participants from the Slovakian Peer Review as well as the Irish expert who attended the 2008 meeting.
- Activities organised during the 2010 Belgian Presidency of the EU, in which SIA was considered as a priority.
- A Peer Review on SIA hosted by Belgium in 2011, which built upon the conclusions of the 2008 Slovakian Peer Review and to which Belgian civil servants from the regional and community level were invited.

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44. The Council for the Socially Excluded is an NGO with a strong lobby function, led by homelessness experts and supported financially by the Danish central government; UNDEFOR is a private foundation in Denmark which combines active social street work with training and research in approaches to homelessness and social marginalisation, which the independent expert had founded in 1997.

In spite of these two (exceptional) cases, it would seem that **dissemination of results represents a weakness of the Peer Reviews in our sample.** This finding is corroborated across the PROGRESS Peer Reviews by respondents' comments in the Final Technical reports that are published every year (see Annex 2). Indeed, PR participants raise serious doubts about the successfulness of the dissemination. A number of them expressed critical remarks on this aspect and claimed that insufficient dissemination of the outputs and conclusions is one of the main weaknesses of the peer review process. They indicated that the peer reviews remained mainly a process by and for insiders and it is likely that many potential users of the peer review results at the domestic level remained unaware about the process and the outcomes.

The question then is: if the dissemination of Peer Review outcomes is so limited overall, *how can these seminars have any effects at all on domestic policymaking?* This brings us to the "mechanisms of change" that can plausibly explain such effects.

5.2 Mechanisms for change

In Section 4 we identified four instances where changes in peer countries' practices can be plausibly linked to discussions held during Peer Review meetings. That is to say that these are cases in which it is *plausible* that some elements of the practice under review have been **transferred** to the peer country as a result of participation in the Peer Review. In this section, we will try to illustrate through which mechanisms such a transfer develops.

The first case concerns the transfer of some elements of the Bavarian system of staff training (discussed in **DE, 2010)** to the Austrian context. During the Peer Review, Austrian representatives expressed interest in the Bavarian system of quality control, since it relied on a policy approach similar to Austrian one ([45]). Moreover, during the Peer Review, the Austrian PCO had the occasion to meet the German national expert who presented the Bavarian example, and invited a national institute for staff training to get in touch with him to discuss staff training. In this case, **transfer was facilitated by the subsequent activation of a network** developed during the Peer Review.

As we pointed out in the previous section, Belgium attended the Slovakian Peer Review (**SK 2008)** in order to learn about ways to improve the social dimension of its 'Sustainability Impact Assessment'. The latter was one of the measures foreseen in the Belgian 'Federal Poverty Reduction Plan' ([46]) approved in the same year as the Peer Review. One of the main doubts that Belgian policy-makers had in relation to the SIA was that this process requires a lot of time, thus threatening – if applied in practice – to slow down the legislative process. Indeed, 'how to keep the process manageable' was an issue discussed during the Peer Review and one of the solutions proposed was the 'Quick Scan' test, which consists of a prior discussion between actors (from different fields of expertise and levels of government) who assess whether a certain measure could have a negative impact. This step determines whether a complete Social Impact Assessment should be carried out. Indeed, this procedure was introduced in Belgium after the PR meeting. In fact, at the federal level, it is now mandatory to include, in the context of the SIA, a 'Quick Scan' test for every government decision submitted to the Council of Ministers. Since Belgian policy-makers became aware of the existence of such a procedure during the Slovakian PR, it is apparent that the meeting represented a key source of inspiration. After further discussions (for example, the 2009 round table in which the Irish expert was also

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45. Namely the existence of a shared a "notion of appropriateness" (i.e. that quality assurance should be based on dialogue and positive incentives rather than standardized questionnaires and threats) and a common concern about the dignity of patients and the motivation of staff.
46. The Federal Poverty Reduction Plan was approved by the Council of Ministers on 4 July 2008; http://www.mi-is.be/be-nl/node/62915

involved), this procedure was transferred to the Belgian context. Considering the ways in which information on the Slovakian Peer Review was disseminated in Belgium (see section 5.1), we can say that the **strategic use of information by domestic actors** (notably, the EC representative during the Slovakian Peer Review) contributed in a decisive way to the transfer of that procedure to the peer country.

The third case is IE (2007). In the UK example, the first mechanism that led to the changes resulting from the Peer Review was **mutual learning. P**articipants, notably from Scotland, indeed learned about the do's and don'ts of stakeholder involvement through the PR site visit (participation in the 2007 Irish SIF), including about the conditions needed to implement the initiative. As a result, the PR had a clear impact on the way Scotland implemented its own initiative, even if officials and stakeholders alike already had a pretty good idea about what they wanted to achieve *before* the PR (i.e. develop a large scale participatory process at national level in Scotland). For the English representative a strong learning point was the extent to which engagement from the Minister enhances the consultation process. Belgian participants to this PR both explained that the Irish experience obliged them to think about how *representative* some stakeholder organisations are, while a Hungarian representative brought home the methodology of working with small groups of people. The second mechanism at work was **agency:** the **right people did the learning at the right time**, and they used the learning points to convince decision makers back home about what needed to be done, and the funding needed to implement it.

As mentioned above, one of the main concerns expressed by the Slovakian delegation during the Czech Peer Review **(CZ 2005)** was related to the funding of the programme on 'Field Social Work in Socially Excluded Communities' implemented by the Czech 'Association of the Field Social Workers' (AFSW). At the time of the Peer Review, the Slovakian programme was entirely financed through the national budget. This issues was raised by the Slovakian delegation both before the Peer Review (in the Comment paper) and during the meeting. Considering that: a) the EC representative insisted during the meeting that the European Social Fund can be used to support capacity building, and b) at the time of Peer Review, 'People in Need' in the Czech Republic was already benefitting from ESF funds, it is reasonable to assume that the subsequent use of such funds for supporting field social work in Slovakia has been stimulated both by the positive experiences of the Czech Republic and the discussions during the Peer Review. In this case, the main mechanism (in addition to mutual learning) behind the transfer of that feature of Czech practice to Slovakia is the **availability of financial resources** (notably, European funds).

For none of the abovementioned cases it is possible to provide the 'ultimate proof' (*smoking gun*) that domestic policy changes are indeed causally linked to the discussions during the Peer Review, let alone that they would be the *only factor* having triggered these changes. However, considering that these changes have been raised and discussed during the PR meetings, that influential actors involved in the domestic policy process attended the meetings and had a role in subsequent changes at the domestic levels, and that foreign experts known by domestic actors during the Peer Reviews had been invited for further discussions in the peer countries, it is possible to establish a credible link between the Peer Reviews and the domestic changes described above.

In sum, this section made it clear that once PR participants return home, disseminating the lessons learned - either inside or outside the organisation - is not particularly high on the agenda. Written reports or feedback meetings are rare: dissemination mostly happens informally and within one's own organisation. There are only two cases, for which we have evidence of a wider dissemination strategy by peer country officials (UK in IE 2007 and Belgium in SK 2008). The independent experts participating in the Peer Reviews have a slightly better track record in terms of dissemination, but again it is far from being systematic. And yet, this

section confirmed that – at least for the described four cases of policy transfer - the PROGRESS Peer Reviews can be seen as an important trigger or catalyst in the decision-making process that led to the observed policy changes. This happened through four mechanisms: mutual learning (participants learn about other practices, or rediscover their own); activation of the network developed during the Peer Review; strategic usages (agency) of newly acquired knowledge by domestic actors, who use lessons learned to convince domestic decision makers; and finally the availability of EU financial resources.

6. FEATURES CONDUCIVE TO MUTUAL LEARNING AND POLICY TRANSFER

6.1 Organizational features of the Peer Review

Organizational features of the Peer Review play an important role in enabling or constraining mutual learning. We have already examined in detail the main organizational features of each PROGRESS meeting considered in this analysis in Deliverable 3 (OSE and PPMI, 2012a). Since those judgements have been largely confirmed by the peer countries' representatives interviewed for this analysis, we will only list some of the features which appear crucial to the success of the Peer Reviews, namely:

- The importance of clearly stating the aim of the meetings;
- The need to have a balanced agenda;
- The quality of the background documents;
- The roles and competences of participants;
- The importance of the site visits;
- The need to have monitoring and evaluation of the practice under review;
- The importance of aspects such as open atmosphere and informal moments;
- The problems deriving from language barriers.

6.2 Host and peer countries' contextual features and features of the policies under review

For this report we considered 10 Peer Review meetings. Practices reviewed during those meetings were varied (policy approaches, reforms, programmes, evaluation methodologies) and each practice had unique characteristics. Moreover, in comparing host and peer countries on dimensions such as similarities and dissimilarities in relation to their contextual and policy features, we have a sample of 10 sets of countries which present rather different characteristics (see section 2). For these reasons, it is difficult to firmly establish how much those dimensions determined the outcomes of the Peer Reviews (i.e. facilitating or constraining mutual learning and policy transfer). That said, even if some caution is needed, some conclusions can be drawn.

First of all, it is clear that the **differences between the host and peer countries' in terms of welfare regimes do not impede mutual learning**. The same is true of differences in contextual and policy features. Indeed, it seems that those differences often provide unexpected learning opportunities, by stimulating peer countries to focus on specific (previously neglected) issues. An example is represented by Denmark in the 2004 UK Peer Review, where differences concerning the size of the two countries, the salience of the problem of rough sleepers, and the role played by the local levels in the policy area did not prevent Denmark from learning from the UK experience, especially concerning procedural issues.

Second, contextual features such as **financial resources, institutional setup and competences attributed to the different levels of government do not impede *individual learning,* but significantly reduce the possibility of organisational learning, let alone policy transfer**. This was, for example, the case with Romania (BE 2005) and Hungary (UK 2006). In the former case, although much was learned from the Belgian experience, the absence of adequate resources and the different institutional set-up impeded policy transfer between the two countries. In the Hungarian case, the absence of adequate resources from the central

budget constrained the possibility of rolling out the Sure Start Programme (as had happened in the English example). Similarly, Spanish and Hungarian participants learned a lot about the Irish SIF (IE 2007), but the territorial dimension in Spain and lack of resources and political commitment in Hungary at the time prevented any transfer of practice after the PR.

It is also clear that **the political context regarding the topic under review has a strong impact on both mutual learning and policy transfer.** This is for example the case of the United Kingdom in NO 2009 and Hungary in UK 2006. In the former case, at the time of the PR the issue of people facing chronic exclusion was rather high on the political agenda in the UK and there were several initiatives targeting people with multiple disadvantages. However, due to political changes determined by the Parliamentary elections held 6 months after the Peer Review, the political commitment on these issues crumbled and existing programmes were rolled up or changed. This prevented any transfer from the Norwegian example and limited the circulation of the information about the Peer Review in the British DWP, and thus, mutual learning was limited. Of course this does not imply that if the political window of opportunity had remained open, that transfer would have occurred in any case. Indeed, a favourable political climate seems to be an important precondition, but does not suffice in itself. The same applies to the Hungarian case where the Minister who launched the Hungarian Sure Start Programme in 2004 moved to a new position in the same year as the British Peer Review. Hungarian participants in IE 2007 explained that the new Hungarian government is rather "closed" and not willing to engage in any dialogue with civil society; and thus the lessons learned from the Irish PR did not find fertile ground.

Forth, **on-going reforms at the time of the Peer Review significantly increase the motivation of the Peer countries to invest, thus facilitating mutual learning.** In several cases, the PROGRESS meetings coincided with reforms planned or underway in the Peer countries (as with Romania in BE 2005, the Netherlands in SE 2007, Belgium in SK 2008 and the UK in IE 2007). In these cases, mutual learning was enhanced by the fact that peer countries' representatives were particularly interested in discussing issues that might help them cope with problems encountered in implementing recent reforms (the Netherlands), to tackle problems with legislation under review (Romania) or learning about the do's and don'ts of stakeholder involvement "*while being in the process of consulting on a big project about participation in Scotland* (UK). By contrast, the timing of the participation of Bulgaria in the 2007 Spanish Peer Review was unfortunate. Indeed, the Bulgarian Operational Programmes were all designed and approved by the European Commission in October 2007 (the same month of the Peer Review). This is to say that the policy was finalised before any real learning could take place.

Fifthly, **previous knowledge of the practice under review or previous contact between the host and the peer countries usually facilitates mutual-learning.** In some cases (Romania in BE 2005, the Netherlands in SE 2007, and the UK in IE 2007), previous knowledge of the host countries' practices was one motivation for attending the meeting and for engaging in more in-depth discussions both during and after the PR. This was especially true of the UK in IE 2007 and the Netherlands in SE 2007. However, **policy transfer that occurs *before* the Peer Review has an ambiguous effect.** In one case (Slovakia in CZ 2005) the fact that the existing Slovakian practice was largely inspired by the Czech one seems to have *limited* further learning or transferring additional elements. Similarly, in another case (Hungary in UK 2006), the fact that learning and transfer between the two countries had happened *before* the meeting was believed to have prevented further mutual learning and transfer.

Turning more specifically to the enabling and constraining factors of ***policy transfer***, we found that the dynamics vary substantially between the four cases we examined in section 5.2. In the Slovakian case (in CZ 2005), at the basis of the transfer there was a burning policy problem, namely the necessity of finding financial resources to alleviate pressure on the national budget. The possibility of using European funds for that kind of programme was raised during the Peer

Review by the host country representatives and EC representative. Finally, such an idea was transferred and applied in Slovakia most likely due to the advocacy of national NGOs. In fact, the representative of the NGO that was implementing the programme attended the Peer Review as PCIE. In the Belgian case (in SK 2008), national policymakers were searching for ways of enhancing social aspects in their national 'Sustainability Impact Assessment'. In this respect, discussions during the Slovakian Peer Review were highly relevant for Belgium. However, the diffusion of that knowledge in the domestic context occurred, coincidentally, because the thematic expert and the EC representative during the Peer Review were Belgian, and *not* because of the actions of the Belgian official representative.

In the Austrian case (in DE 2010), staff training was not seen as a problem. On the contrary, the Austrian system was considered by Peer Review participants as a good practice. However, in discussing the Bavarian system, Austrian participants perceived that some improvements were possible. Consequently, the national expert who presented the Bavarian case was invited by the Austrian PCO for an exchange of experiences and some of the features the Bavarian system of staff training were subsequently transferred in the Austrian system. In the case of the United Kingdom, participation in the Irish Peer Review (IE 2007) on the Social Inclusion Forum (SIF) provided the necessary legitimacy and 'ultimate proof' (through a site visit which consisted of participating in the Irish SIF itself) that involving people experiencing poverty is actually possible and indeed useful. As such, it provided the necessary trigger for the both the English and Scottish representatives to push through some of the ideas they had been preparing in the domestic setting. In the case of England "*we were able to use participation in the PR to persuade some people who had access to money in government to give us a little bit more money. The PR gave more depth to the argument*" (IE 2007).

What links these four (rather different) instances of policy transfer is that in all four cases, it was **procedural aspects** of the practices under review that were transferred. In three out of four cases, it has happened **between countries which share important similarities** in terms of existing programmes (Slovakia and the Czech Republic), or policy approaches (Austria and Bavaria; UK and Ireland) (47). This is consistent with the more general finding (across PROGRESS PR) that the similarities between the peer and host countries are perceived, in the Comment papers, as an important pre-condition for transferability by a number of countries; and Member States' comments indeed indicate that although some countries considered transferring policy substance, most of them were more likely to consider a transfer at *procedural* level.

Transfer took place in all four cases (SK, BE, and both UK cases) **in the context of a perceived policy problem** with the host country practice. In all the cases, a **practical illustration for coping with such problems** (or, for improving the national practice, as in the Austrian case) was discussed during the Peer Review. In all four cases national actors with the right competences for recognising the usefulness of solutions (and interested in promoting them) attended the meeting where they were discussed. In other words, the **right people were doing the learning**, in that those actors had a role in their national context which allowed them to introduce the practice (AT), lobby for it (SK, and both UK cases), or to promote higher-level awareness and encourage debates about it (BE).

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47. In the Belgian case (SK 2008), transfer has not developed from the host to the peer countries but it can be said that it has been a result of the discussion held during the Peer review (to which several actors contributed).

In sum, this section highlighted some of the key *organisational* features (further elaborated in Deliverable 3) that enable and constrain mutual learning, such as the importance of clearly defining the aim of the PR, the quality of the preparation (incl. background documents) the selection of participants and the problems deriving from language barriers. Even if some prudence is needed, we identified some of the host and peer countries *contextual features* that have an impact on the PR outcomes: (1) the differences between the host and peer countries' in terms of welfare regimes do not impede mutual learning; (2) contextual features such as financial resources, institutional setup and competences attributed to the different levels of government do not impede *individual learning,* but significantly impact on the possibility of organisational learning as well as of policy transfer taking place; (3) the political context regarding the topic under review has a strong impact on both mutual learning and policy transfer; (4) on-going reforms at the time of the Peer Review significantly increase the motivation of the Peer countries to invest, thus facilitating mutual learning; (5) previous knowledge of the practice under review, or previous contact between the host and the peer countries, usually facilitates mutual-learning but sometimes has ambiguous effects (i.e. may also prevent further learning or transfer). The four case of policy transfer concerned the *procedural aspects* of the practices under review, mostly happened between countries which share important *similarities* in terms of existing programmes or policy approaches, were related to a perceived *policy problems* for which practical *solutions* were discussed at the PR. Crucially, in each of these four cases the "*right people for doing the learning*" were present at the PR.

⭕ 7. WRAPPING THINGS UP

The purpose of Task 4 was to examine to what **extent, under which circumstances, from whom and by whom learning has taken place** during and after ten selected Peer Reviews. The focus was on the *participant countries*, not the host countries, which were assessed in Deliverable 3. The goal was also to identify elements conducive to or impeding such mutual learning. The case studies in Task 4 were structured around three evaluation questions and a number of hypotheses, to which we return in this concluding section. A more detailed summary of the findings can be found in the boxes at the end of each section of this report.

7.1 Who has been learning what and from whom: identifying "learners" and "tutors"

Unsurprisingly, Peer Reviews have been a good occasion for **individual learning**. This involves improving knowledge about the host countries' practices under review, the ones of the other participating countries, as well as actions and contributions at the community level.

In most of the cases, the peer countries' attitude *changed* according to the specific issues under discussion. While some pure 'learning' and pure 'tutoring' attitudes were evident in the peer countries' Comment Papers, those attitudes usually emerged during the Review. That is, peer country representatives learn from the host country and vice versa, while peer countries also learn from each other (this finding is corroborated more generally for PROGRESS PR in the Final Technical Reports, see Annex 2). Importantly, the existence of national good practices is sometimes 'discovered' by the peer country representatives during the meetings itself, as a consequence of discussions held (*mirror effect*). As was the case with host countries (Deliverable 3), peer countries mostly want to *exchange* ideas and experience with other participants, i.e. to learn *with* others, rather than only learning *from* others.

In many cases the information gained during the Peer Reviews has trickled down in peer countries' domestic organisations. Thus, Peer Reviews entailed at least some changes at the **cognitive level**. This is to say that the Peer Reviews increased institutional knowledge of what other countries were doing, provided examples of good practices from which inspiration was drawn for improving national practices, and increased awareness of domestic strengths and weakness. Strong learning points concern both **procedural and substantive** aspects of practices discussed during the Peer Review. This knowledge has sometimes been used in discourses developed at the national level, thus entering into the national debate (**discursive diffusion**). There are only two cases, for which we have evidence of a wider dissemination strategy in a peer country about a PROGRESS PR meeting

Both cognitive effects and discursive diffusion are typically limited to the **organisations of the national representatives**: national Ministries for the PCOs, and stakeholders' organisations or academic and research institutes for the PCIEs. Peer countries have **very few** channels for disseminating information concerning the Peer Reviews (mostly in the form of oral debriefings, rather than broad "strategies").

The lack of dissemination is partially offset by the fact that, in most cases in our sample, peer countries' representatives can be considered as the 'right persons' for attending the meetings. Indeed, they tended to have knowledge of the topic and a role in national organizations that allowed them to contribute to discussions during the meeting and to subsequently influence national policies (at least by diffusing information in relevant national decision-making venues).

The lack of systematic dissemination remains problematic, however, because without it there is a risk that information obtained and lessons learned are lost when participants change position, which happens very frequently. In some cases peer countries' representatives have **created networks** with other participants, and in a few cases this network has been exploited for inviting foreign experts in their own countries, thus contributing to the domestic debate.

7.2 What can we learn about features in the Peer Review process which are conducive to mutual learning?

Some organisational features appear as 'key' to the success of the Peer Reviews (see also Deliverable 3, OSE and PPMI, 2012a):

- The importance of clearly stating the aim of the meetings;
- The need to have a balanced agenda;
- The quality of the background documents;
- The roles and competences of participants;
- The importance of the site visit;
- The need to have monitoring and evaluation of the practice under review;
- The importance of aspects such as open atmosphere and informal moments;
- The problems deriving from language barriers.

As regards the characteristics of the countries involved, in 6 cases in our study the host and peer country belong to different welfare regimes: Belgium (in SK 2008), Bulgaria (in ES 2007), Denmark (in UK 2004), Hungary (in UK 2006), Romania (in BE 2005), United Kingdom (in NO 2009). However, there are *significant examples of policy learning between these countries*. It seems that those differences often provide unexpected learning opportunities by stimulating peer countries to focus on specific, and previously unknown issues. There are two cases in our study where the host and peer countries, though belonging to *different welfare regimes*, showed important *similarities* concerning the actual *practice* reviewed. We also have one case where, although the peer and host country belong to the *same welfare regime*, present rather *different practices* concerning the topic of the Peer Review, namely Austria (in DE 2010). In other words, any discussion about learning between countries belonging to 'the same welfare model' should be nuanced and the similarities or differences between the *actual practices that are reviewed* should be taken into consideration.

Contextual features such as financial resources, institutional setup and competences attributed to the different levels of government do not impede *mutual learning* but significantly reduce the possibility of *policy transfer*. The political context surrounding the topic under review also has a significant impact on both mutual learning and policy transfer. On-going reforms at the time of the Peer Review significantly increase the motivation of the peer countries, thus facilitating mutual learning. This finding strongly suggests that there is value in earmarking part of the PROGRESS budget for assisting Member States with their reforms through ad hoc Peer Reviews, so as to capitalise (on short notice) on the window that opens early in the reform process. Of course such a "prompt" Peer Review will need to overcome some real challenges in terms of preparation, in view of our finding that the quality of preparation is a key success factor for PROGRESS PR.

7.3 What can we learn about transferability conditions?

In all four cases of policy transfer we found, it was **procedural aspects** of the practices under review that were transferred. This seems to confirm the hypothesis that transferability is

greater at the procedural level (the *governance* of domestic policies) than at the substantive level (i.e. actual policies, agenda setting, and legislative changes). In all cases, a practical solution for coping with a problem - or for improving national practice, even where existing practice was not seen as deficient per se, as in the Austrian case - was offered during the Peer Review.

In three out of four cases, policy transfer happened between countries which share some similarities in terms of existing programmes. This seems to confirm the hypothesis that actual policy transfer is easier between 'similar' Member States (both in terms of institutional setup and existing practices).

By contrast, there is no evidence to support our initial hypothesis (see Section 1) that "transferability is easier where national transmission mechanisms exist". The truth is that we simply **did not come across any such transmission mechanism** (i.e. formal channels for disseminating information): dissemination mostly happens through oral briefings. What seems far more important for policy transfer is that a national actor with the right competences for recognising the usefulness of a solution (and interested in promoting that solution) was attending the meeting, and that those actors had a role in their national context which allowed them to introduce the practice, to advocate for it, or to promote higher-level awareness and encourage debates on it.

Finally, as almost all our case studies dealt with Social Inclusion, we have not been able to test the hypothesis that transferability is easier in certain issue areas (social inclusion) than in others (pensions, healthcare). But at first sight, our finding is **that PR focussed on pensions and health and long-term care also provide high learning points.** This finding is consistent with the more general finding, across all PROGRESS PR, that all in all, there is little evidence that the peer reviews devoted to social inclusion issues are perceived as more useful in terms of mutual learning by the participants. Although most of the peer reviews dealing with pensions and healthcare issues received rather average evaluations (in the *impact evaluations*), only very few were distinguished as outliers (PPMI and OSE, 2011a). We do have (limited) confirmation of the hypothesis that transferability is lower in new Member States (i.e. those having acceded after 2004) due to other pressures (problem load, international influence, financial resources) on domestic welfare states. Participants from new Member States more often define themselves as 'learners'; and yet, participants from new Member States do act as tutors on some specific points.

As a general conclusion we can say that peer countries who "have a stake" in the Peer Review process (i.e. actively engage in it) clearly reap a return on that investment, in terms of networking, individual learning, organisational learning, or even policy transfer. Further research will have to clarify whether the mechanisms that explain such effects - namely mutual learning (participants learn about other practices, or rediscover their own), activation of the network developed during the Peer Review, strategic usages (agency) of newly acquired knowledge by domestic actors, and availability of (EU) financial resources – equally produce effects in peer countries without such an investment in the PR.

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ANNEX 1.
OVERVIEW OF CASE STUDIES AND EXPERTS INVOLVED

PR Date	Host country (code in text)	Topic	Key theme(s)	Author(s)	Nr of Interviews
05-06.05.2004	United Kingdom (UK 2004)	The Rough Sleepers Unit (England)	Quality and accessibility of social services; Homelessness and housing exclusion	Volker Busch-Geertsema with Freek Spinnewijn	8
19-20.05.2005	Czech Republic (CZ 2005)	Field Social Work Programmes in Neighbourhoods Threatened by Social Exclusion	Integration of ethnic minorities and immigrants; Quality and accessibility of social services	Romana Careja	4
7-8.11. 2005	Belgium (BE 2005)	Minimum Incomes and social integration institutional arrangements	Promoting active inclusion	Ramón Peña-Casas and Sebastiano Sabato	6
04-05.06.2006	United Kingdom (UK 2006)	The UK government's Sure Start Programme	Children and families	Mary Daly	6
13-14.09.2007	Sweden (SE 2007)	Freedom of choice and dignity for the elderly	Quality and accessibility of social services; Ageing and providing adequate and sustainable pensions; Health and long-term care	David Natali and Tereza Wennerholm Čáslavská	10
25-26.10.2007	Spain (ES 2007)	Multi-Regional Operational Programme to Combat Discrimination	Integration of ethnic minorities and immigrants; Promoting active inclusion	Dalila Ghailani with Maria Carolina Melo	4
15-16.11.2007	Ireland (IE 2007)	The NAPInclusion Social Inclusion Forum	Governance	Bart Vanhercke with Charlotte Hick and Tereza Wennerholm Čáslavská	7
06 -07.11.2008	Slovakia (SK 2008)	Social Impact Assessment	Governance	Régine Kiasuwa	6
29-30.10.2009	Norway (NO 2009)	Developing well-targeted tools for the active inclusion of vulnerable people	Promoting active inclusion	Irma Budginaitė	8
18-19.10.2010	Germany (DE 2010)	Achieving quality long-term care in residential facilities	Ageng and providing adequate and sustainable pensions; Health and long-term care	Timo Weishaupt and Claudia Göbel	6
					Total 65

⭕ ANNEX 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The *key sources of information* were the documents available on the peer review web-site[48]; specifically: the peer review minutes, synthesis reports, short reports, discussion papers, host country reports, comment papers and stakeholder papers. We also extensively used the annual technical reports of the service contracts assisting the European Commission and Member States in carrying out peer reviews[49].

General analysis of the peer reviews was also based on the data gathered through the evaluation activities in the peer review process. The peer reviews are assessed usually in two ways:

- *Immediate evaluation* through feedback questionnaires completed at the end of each peer review meeting;
- *Impact evaluation* through surveying of peer review participants 6-12 months after the seminar.

It should be noted that there is a limit related to the use of questionnaires examining learning process. *First*, as noted by Nedergaard, actors are themselves frequently unaware or unable to remember what they specifically learned which makes inherently difficult to measure the degree of learning[50]. *Second*, there is often a conflict between what people say they believe and the evidence from their actions (espoused theory vs. theory in use). Although people frequently claim to have learned new ideas and practices this is not always manifested in their behaviour[51]. *Third*, the response rate to the evaluation questionnaires was quite low. For example, on average between 57 and 67 pct. of participants answered the *immediate evaluation* questionnaire. Meanwhile, the response rate to the *impact evaluation* questionnaire was very low varying from 11 pct. to 59 pct. depending on the peer review[52]. Therefore, the conclusions drawn on the data provided by questionnaires should be treated with appropriate caution.

We also extensively used the mapping data from the *Deliverable 1*, specifically:

- *Map 9. Transferability of practices discussed during peer review seminars*;
- *Annex 3. The transferability data.*

They both resulted from the analysis of the comments of the countries on whether they find the practices presented during a particular peer review interesting and transferable, or difficult to transfer (see Box 1).

Box 1. Transferability of practices discussed during peer review meetings

> During the peer review seminar the participants discussed the lessons learned and transferability of the main components of the policy/practice under review[53]. We analysed the comments of Member States' representatives and indicated which countries expressed most clearly their readiness to use partially or fully the practice discussed during the peer review seminar. To be more precise, we analysed the comments of Member States' representatives in the minutes, synthesis reports, comments' papers and assessed whether these representatives signal clearly their

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[48] http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu/peer-reviews

[49] In 2004-2005 the service contract was implemented by INBAS, European Centre and NIZW; in 2006-2010 – by a consortium led by ÖSB Consulting.

[50] Nedergaard, Peter, "Which Countries Learn from Which? A Comparative Analysis of the Direction of Mutual Learning Processes within the Open Method of Coordination Committees of the European Union and among the Nordic Countries". *Cooperation and Conflict,* 41, 2006: 422-442.

[51] Easterby-Smith, Mark, "Disciplines of Organizational Learning: Contributions and Critiques", *Human Relations*, 50(9), 1997: 1085-1113.

[52] The lowest response rate (20%) was in 2006, while the highest (41%) in 2007. In 2008 it remained almost the same as in previous year (40 %), while in 2009 and 2010 it dropped significantly (28 % and 26 % respectively).

[53] European Commission, *Operational Guide*, p. 3. Available at: http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu/network-of-independent-experts/operational-guide_en_network.

> intention/ readiness to use or transfer at least some elements of the practice discussed in their national policies or, on the other hand, they emphasised the institutional and other differences between the countries that make any transfer unlikely. In Map 9 of Deliverable 1 we indicated which countries expressed most clearly their readiness to use partially or fully the practice discussed during the peer review seminar. In Annex of Deliverable 1 we presented the data used for compiling Map 9 – quotations from various documents that we considered as signalling the potential for transfer.
>
> *See Map 9 and Annex 3, Deliverable 1 for more details.*

There are some limits related to the use of this data set. *First*, it relies on subjective assessments by participants and the research team. Map 9 and Annex 3 (Deliverable 1) were produced on the basis of comments from Member States' participants, whether, *in their opinion*, a practice presented is transferable. However, some participants might be more enthusiastic about using the word "transfer", while others might use a more cautious language even though they do see a potential for transfer. Another aspect of subjectivity is that we used our expert judgement in deciding, based on the language used by participants, whether they are referring to a potential for transfer.

Second, not all peer reviews were covered in Map 9 and Annex 3. A number of peer reviews, which focused on the general EU problem or provided information for policy reform in the host country, were not included in the analysis because transferability aspect was of limited relevance to these peer reviews and this aspect was not covered during the peer review meeting. Furthermore, the documents of some peer reviews (in particular in the programme years 2009 and 2010) were less clear concerning the transferability to specific participating countries, but discussed this issue in more general terms[54]. This does not mean that the practices presented during these years were in principle less transferable, however they were much more difficult to identify based just on documentary analysis.

Despite the serious limitations outlined above, it is the most useful and comprehensive secondary data on learning direction and content available at this stage of analysis. It will be used only to present a general overview of all peer reviews and it will provide background information for the in-depth analysis of the ten cases studies, which will allow us to draw better-founded conclusions about the learning process.

The further analysis will be structured around the evaluation questions provided in the Technical Specifications:

- *Question 1:* Who has been learning what, from whom?
- *Question 2:* What can we learn about features in the process which are conducive to mutual learning?
- *Question 3:* What can we learn about transferability conditions (conditions under which policy transfer can occur)?

1. Learning direction and content

Relying exclusively on the peer review documents and the results of the evaluations, in this section we tried to shed some light on the learning direction and content. First, we tried to answer who has been learning and from whom. Second, we focused more on the learning content aiming at indicating what has been learned and from whom. We used an analytical distinction, proposed by Nedergaard[55], between those who learned and those from whom learning took place: we regarded a country as a potential *tutor*, if it hosted a peer review, during which peer countries expressed interest in transferring the practice presented and we regarded it as a *learner*, if its representatives expressed such an interest.

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[54] Given that we relied entirely on the text analysis, this is the key reason why number of participants signalling their interest in the practices and even potential for transferability was lower than for the previous years.

[55] Nedergaard argued that countries can be referred-to as learners if their representatives stated that they have learned from others; meanwhile the countries can be named tutors in case these officials stated clearly that they learned from these countries.

1.1.   Who has been learning and from whom

Similarly to Ballester and Papadopoulos[56], we compared the Member States' "records of attendance" in order to reveal if there were any fluctuations in terms of hosting and attendance, presuming that the intensity of contacts between the countries can have a positive impact on mutual learning. Figure 1 demonstrates that Germany was the country that hosted the highest number of meetings (6 peer reviews) closely followed by Belgium, Spain and France (5 peer reviews each). Although EU15 countries were overrepresented among the hosts in 2004-2010, a number of peer reviews was organised by EU12 countries, among which Hungary stood out as an active host (3 peer reviews). Presuming that the peer countries had more opportunities to learn from those countries, which hosted more peer reviews than the others, it seems likely that they could be potentially perceived by the participants as *tutors*. Meanwhile, the countries which attended the peer reviews most often (i.e. Finland, Hungary, Romania, the United Kingdom and Luxembourg) had more occasions to listen about the other countries' practices, to share their own experiences and (potentially) had more chances to learn from them.

Figure 1. Peer review host and peer countries, 2004-2010
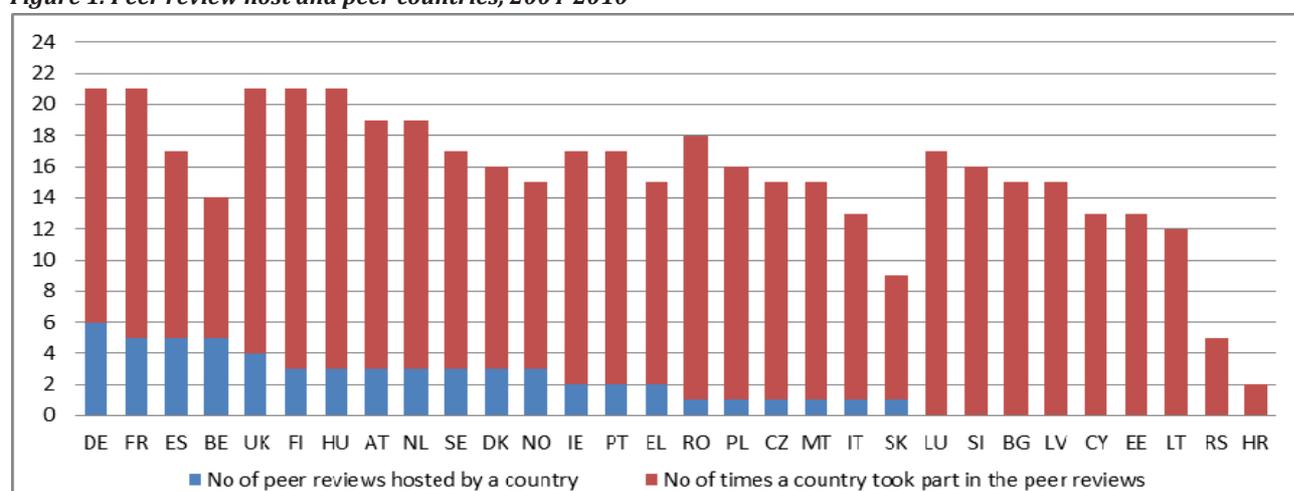
For more details see Map 1, Deliverable 1.

It is likely that countries learned more during those peer reviews, which were assessed significantly better by the participants. The results of the *immediate* and *impact evaluations* (see Box 2) showed that overall many peer reviews received very positive evaluations regarding the usefulness of the outcomes and no significant fluctuations were identified while analysing the results by year or by key theme[57]. Furthermore, there was very little evidence that respondents perceived the meetings held in countries which have more experience in hosting peer reviews (i.e. Germany, France, Spain, Belgium among the others) as more useful than in those countries which organised one peer review meeting so far.

Box 2. Learning direction: selected questions from immediate and impact evaluations

> In the *immediate evaluation* questionnaire, the participants were asked to assess:
> •   the usefulness of the outcomes from the review (in terms of their learning value, or the possibilities they offer for transferability of the policy approach).
>
> This aspect was assessed on a scale "very good"(=100), "good"(=75), "fair"(=50), "bad"(=25) and "very bad"(=0). The aggregated answer was then calculated as a mean of all the answers.
>
> In the *impact evaluation* questionnaire, the participants were asked the following questions:
> •   How far were objectives/expectations met in participating in peer review?
> •   Would you say that the information gained [during the peer review meeting] could be useful in policy

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[56] Ballester, Ramon and Theo Papadopoulos, "The Peer Review Process in the European Employment Strategy: a comprehensive analysis of operational outputs". *The European Research Institute Working paper Series.* March, 2009.
[57] For more information see Figure 13 and Figure 14, Deliverable 1.

development?

As for the first question, an aggregated answer was calculated as mean of the following answers: fully met/exceeded and generally met. Regarding the second question, an aggregated answer was calculated as percentage of the participants, who answered "yes" to this question. *For more details see Map 8, Deliverable 1.*

There was variation in the assessments among individual peer reviews with some receiving rather low scores on these aspects, while others were assessed very positively. Four peer reviews (i.e. United Kingdom 2006, Sweden 2006, Germany 2009-Jun and Norway 2009) were single out as particularly successful, because they were assessed very well by at least 90 pct. of respondents in the *immediate evaluation*. Interestingly, two of them (i.e. Sweden 2006 and Norway 2009) were also identified as (small) outliers in the *impact evaluation* questionnaires regarding the expectations and usefulness of the information[58]. Although one could expect that more mutual learning was taking place during these particular peer reviews, no far reaching conclusions can be made due to the very low response rate to the questionnaires[59].

One should also bear in mind that the reasons, why these peer reviews were perceived as useful, may differ. When asked how a particular peer review contributed to policy development, some of the participants agreed that parts of the practices presented were applied in their national contexts, while others noted that it enabled them to see what is less likely to work in their own institutional, legal and cultural context and helped in avoiding possible pitfalls in their own policy development (e.g. Hungary 2007, the Netherlands 2006, and Sweden 2007)[60].

The analysis of the peer review documents showed that learning directions might vary in time and between the peer reviews. While asked to think back about their main objectives and expectations in participating in one of the peer reviews during the initial years, most of the participants perceived the peer review meetings as a mean of learning about a policy in a particular host country[61]. As the peer reviews evolved, they started to see it equally (or even more) as a way to learn more generally about similar policies in a range of participating peer countries. The data from the *impact evaluation* questionnaires covering the peer reviews of 2007 onwards showed that as time passed by the peer countries more often were named as *tutors* by other participants[62]. As demonstrated in Box 3, several peer countries directly expressed the willingness to share the experiences with the host country on equal basis, because they are equally advanced and are going to similar direction (e.g. Denmark 2007). Thus, they can be potential *tutors* for each other. The participants of other peer reviews (e.g. Germany 2004; United Kingdom 2006) indicated that they also learned about the on-going attempts of other peer countries (e.g. Hungary) to transfer the practice under discussion. There was also some supporting evidence that both host and peer country experiences encouraged the development of particular projects in the participating countries (e.g. Ireland 2004).

Given rather limited evidence gathered from the analysis of the evaluation results about the learning direction, we also looked at other sources available, such as Member States' comments about the transferability of the practices presented (Map 9 and Annex 3, Deliverable 1). It showed that in most cases at least one of the participants directly referred to a possibility to transfer the practice presented during each of peer review; and in a number of cases the peer reviews were considered as having potentially transferable elements by several peer countries (see Map 9, Deliverable 1). To be more precise, the participants relatively often talked about the potential transfer during the peer reviews hosted by France (4 during out of 5 peer reviews), Spain (during 3 out of 5 peer reviews), and the United Kingdom (during 3 out of 4 peer

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[58] Only about 55 pct. of respondents agreed that the information gained during the Austrian peer review (2008) was useful in policy development.

[59] The number of participants in a peer review was around 30-40, while the response rate to the immediate questionnaire was around 60-70 pct. and the response rate to the impact evaluation questionnaire on average was around 30 pct.

[60] See Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2007:69; Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2008:48.

[61] Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2006:54.

[62] Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2008:40.

reviews). Furthermore, some countries, which hosted relatively small number of peer reviews, were also frequently mentioned as *tutors* (e.g. Finland, Norway and Ireland)[63].

The majority of the peer reviews, which were regarded as having potentially transferable practices by the participants, were hosted by EU15 countries (such as Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and the United Kingdom) and Norway. Among the peer reviews hosted by the EU12 countries, only the Czech peer review on field social work programmes (2005) was indicated as having transferable practices by several participating countries. This disproportion reflects the fact the EU15 countries were overrepresented as host countries, as explained above. Although those countries, which hosted more peer reviews than the others were mentioned more often as tutors, two important exceptions need to be mentioned in this respect. Germany and Belgium hosted six and five peer reviews respectively, but were not often mentioned as tutors. This can be explained by the fact that the peer review meetings hosted by these two countries often aimed at discussing general EU issues or policy reforms and the transferability aspect was not discussed[64].

Box 3. Learning direction

During the Danish peer review on human trafficking (2007) Norwegian representatives underlined that there is a "huge potential of transferability of policies between Norway and Denmark as both policies include and stress on social aspects". They acknowledged that many of the main parts of the Danish policy are very similar to those in use in Norway, therefore a there is a substantial potential for the two countries to learn from each other's experiences, and by keeping an open dialogue, each other's mistakes[65].

The Hungarian representatives mentioned that the *Sure Start Programme* was adopted from the United Kingdom and at the time of the peer review (2006) it was already implemented in a number of settlements. In addition, they recognised that Hungary has already worked with the *Hertie Foundation* to adapt the German *Career and Family Audit* to local conditions and that transfer is already under way when the peer review was held (Germany 2004).

During the Irish peer review on a measure in which the counselling process is supervised by a management board ("Money Advice and Budgeting Service", 2004), the peer country Netherlands reported a Dutch measure, in which the municipal banks have a leading role, in particular regarding debt rescheduling. The German delegate perceived both the Irish and the Dutch ways of involving the financial sector in the debt counselling process as options for a transfer to Germany. After the peer review the German ministry commissioned a feasibility study in order to investigate the Irish and Dutch systems in more detail and to determine the degree of transferability to Germany. The report of this feasibility study was made available in November 2005, which feed-in the development of the pilot projects in Germany (based on the Irish and Dutch experiences)[66].

The content analysis of the Member States' comments also indicated that some countries reported their intensions to transfer a policy presented rather frequently (e.g. Malta, Poland, Hungary, Latvia, Cyprus); while others (e.g. Belgium, Sweden, Finland, Italy) barely mentioned a possibility of any transfer in their comment papers and discussions. As illustrated in the **Erreur ! Source du renvoi introuvable.**, the participants from Poland were likely to use such expressions as "potentially transferable", "could be transferred" or tended to underline that their country "could adopt a number of good practices and experiences"; while the Belgian representatives barely mentioned directly their intensions to transfer any of the practices presented, although they acknowledged that some ideas and approaches were "interesting", "appealing", "relevant" etc. These differences in discourses can be probably explained by presuming that some countries are more likely to take up the role of a learner than others (e.g. new Member States) or are likely to refer to a transfer for symbolic reasons in order to secure political support[67]. It is also possible that some countries tend to over-use such expression as "potentially transferable", although they do not clearly see such a potential; while others, which

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[63] Although Finland hosted only 3 peer reviews, more than three participating countries mentioned their intensions to transfer the policies presented in each of these meetings.

[64] Four peer reviews were devoted to discuss general EU policy problem (Belgium 2006, 2007, Germany 2008, Germany 2009-Jun) and one aimed at discussing a policy reform (Germany 2009-Dec).

[65] See Minutes, Denmark "Social aspects of human trafficking", 2007:31.

[66] Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2005.

[67] Randma-Liiv, Tiina and Riin Kruusenberg, "West-East policy transfer: motives, scope, role models and agents", IRSPM Conference , Panel 7: International Policy Learning and Transfer in Public Administration, Berne, 7-9 April 2010:3.

seriously consider transferring parts of the practice presented, can use more cautions language and rather focus on the challenges that need to be overcome.

Box 4.Transferability of practices presented: extracts from the Member States' comments

Poland. The representatives from Poland identified the national fund for child support, the documentation centre, and the partnership with local communities presented during the Italian peer review on preventing the risks of exclusion (2005) as potentially transferable. They also acknowledged that several aspects of the Danish approach to prevent human trafficking (2007) could be transferred to the Polish situation. The areas of transferability identified by the Polish representatives during the German peer review "Getting women back into the labour marker" (2008-Nov) included improvements in child care infrastructure, more flexible and individualised leaves, income tax changes among the others; and the idea behind the Norwegian Qualification Programme (2009) was also mentioned as potentially transferable. The participants from Poland also underlined that their country could adopt a number of good practices and experiences in establishing a homelessness strategy from Portugal (2010) and expected the Greek peer review (2005) to help to re-discuss the community mental care model and to incorporate vocational training into the existing legal structure.

Belgium. The Belgian representatives agreed that some elements of the local development agreements (Sweden 2004) and social inclusion forum (Ireland 2007) are interesting. They found the French policy aiming at reducing policy (2009-Dec) appealing and the issues discussed during the Romanian peer review on social service provision (2010) important; as well as acknowledged the relevance of citizens' social support networks (Finland 2004) and usefulness of some aspects (i.e. health aspect) of French measures aiming at fighting the substandard housing (France 2007).

1.2. What has been learned and from whom

The Member States' commitment to the peer review process can fluctuate both in terms of attendance and in terms of interest, as demonstrated Ballester and Papadopoulos' study on peer review in *European Employment Strategy*[68]. In this section we explored what has been learned and from whom by the key themes. *First*, we examined, if any host country can be distinguished regarding the number of the peer reviews organised and if any peer countries were more likely than the others to take part in a particular thematic area. *Second*, we exclusively focused on these peer reviews, which were identified by several participating countries as having a transferable practice. We analysed the comments of the Member States representatives in order to know, if they intended to transfer a policy as a whole or only the specific aspects of it, as well as to learn more about the potential difficulties, mentioned by the participants.

1.2.1. Integration of ethnic minorities and immigrants

Potential tutors. In the area of the *integration of ethnic minorities and immigrants* Spain stood out as a country which hosted a biggest number of meetings (4 peer reviews). Usually one to two peer countries indicated their intention to transfer (parts of the) practices presented during the peer reviews held in Spain[69]. In addition, a number of countries considered transferring some elements from the field social work programme (Czech Republic, 2005) and Danish approach to combat human trafficking presented in 2007 (see Annex 3).

Potential learners. The representatives from Czech Republic and Spain were regularly present in the peer reviews; they attended four and three meetings respectively. This shows that the two countries probably had a particular interest in the thematic area, because they also hosted peer reviews on this subject. As for the other peer countries, Greece, Finland, Italy and Germany are also worth being mentioned, because they participated in four peer reviews each. However, these countries did not necessarily meet, because they often attended different peer reviews.

Learning content. The representatives from Spain, Romania and United Kingdom were interested in transferring the field social work programme, presented during the Czech peer review held in 2005 (see Annex 3). The former two considered the approach presented relevant and possibly useful as model in their national context, while the latter expressed interest in

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[68] See: Ballester and Papadopoulos, 2009.
[69] See the following peer reviews: Spain 2006, 2007, 2008. The fourth peer review was devoted to discuss a policy reform; therefore the transferability aspect was not discussed.

transferring several aspects of the programme in terms of "tackling social exclusion among Gypsy and Traveller communities". Meanwhile, the approach presented during the Danish peer review on social aspects of human trafficking (2007) was considered as inspirational by representatives from Slovakia; representatives from Poland were interested in organising similar initiative as "Stop Trafficking camp 07" in Poland. The Norwegian participants underlined that Danish approach has a huge potential of transferability due to the similarities between the anti-trafficking approaches of both countries. Meanwhile, Greek representatives emphasized the number of differences regarding the situation of trafficking in human beings between the two countries, which should be taken into account.

1.2.2. Quality and accessibility of services

Potential tutors. In this thematic area two countries – Sweden (2004, 2006, and 2007) and Denmark (2005, 2009) – hosted more than one peer review, but not many participants of these peer reviews expressed their interest in transferring practice discussed. In contrast, several countries mentioned Austrian (2004), Finish (2004), Czech (2005), Hungarian (2005) and Norwegian (2006) peer reviews as having potentially transferable practices (Annex 3).

Potential learners. The countries, which attended the biggest number of the peer reviews in this thematic area were Poland (8 peer reviews), Netherlands (7), Lithuania (7), Finland (6) and Estonia (6)[70]. But very little overlap was noticed when it comes to the peer reviews they attended, i.e. they mainly attended different peer review meetings. Thus the secondary data does not provide evidence that some networks are established between the participants based on the peer reviews meetings.

Learning content. Several peer countries present (e.g. Austria, Greece, Latvia and Malta) found much of interest in the methods adopted in Finish citizens' social support networks (HYVE) such as paired working and in the NGO funding system[71], despite a number of differences in their national contexts. Austrians underlined structural differences, Greeks emphasized differences in welfare state model, Latvians recognized that their country is a long way from being able to adopt HYVE, but all four countries considered piloting Finish model at local level (Austria, Malta), within a region (Latvia) or "in those municipalities that are already going in that direction" (Greece). In case of the other peer reviews some peer countries expressed their interest in transferring the approach presented as a whole (e.g. Italy in Austria 2004; Spain and Romania in Czech Republic 2005; Finland in Hungary 2005; Sweden in Norway 2006). A number of participants expressed interest in particular aspects of the other programmes presented, often emphasizing the specific conditions necessary for transfer or difficulties that might be encountered. For example, Portuguese representatives considered transferring Hungarian caretaker model if "the need for an initial and continuous training process and an institutional framework with supervision is considered"; while participants from Austria acknowledged that Norwegian policy aiming to phase out temporary accommodation could be transferred in the context where there is a supply of permanent housing.

1.2.3. Homelessness and housing exclusion

Potential tutors. There were eight peer reviews organised in this thematic area from 2004 to 2010, which looked mostly at broad homelessness strategies and substandard housing. All of the host countries organised only one peer review each. And all but one peer review was distinguished as having transferable ideas or parts of good practice by several peer countries (Annex 3)[72].

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[70] Sweden participated in two peer reviews, Denmark in one peer review.
[71] Synthesis report, Finish peer review "Citizens' social supports networks HYVE", 2004:2.
[72] The latter peer review (Austria 2009) was devoted to discuss a general EU policy problem; therefore during this particular peer review the transferability aspects were not discussed.

Potential learners. As for the peer countries, one can distinguish Denmark, which attended five peer reviews, closely followed by Luxembourg, Sweden, Hungary and Slovenia (four peer reviews each). The former three countries also expressed their intentions to transfer the practice presented, but none of them did it more than once. Although most of the countries did not meet much due to the fact that they attended different peer reviews, there was also some evidence of the establishment of closer ties between the participants when it comes to the latest peer reviews organised in this thematic area. One of the Finish officials responsible for the peer review meeting in Helsinki (2010) participated in the Portuguese peer review, and the Portuguese host country responsible in turn took part in the Finish one. Also the thematic experts of these two peer reviews were in close contact and updated each other on the ongoing work, as reported by the peer review managers[73].

Learning content. Generally, most of the participants were interested in transferring parts of the practice presented rather than the policy presented as a whole. For example, the participants of French peer review "National Action Plan against Substandard Housing" (2007) recognized that it gave rise to interesting considerations. However, none of them considered transferring the model directly to their national contexts due to a number of reasons (e.g. size of country, number of citizens, advancement in the field, lack of definition etc.). Representatives from Latvia, Luxembourg and Malta were interested in transferring some specific elements (e.g. methods of identification of substandard housing, check-up visits, checklist), while Danish representatives expressed their interest in legal aspects (e.g. legal right of every individual to be housed).

As for the remaining peer reviews, the participants of the Norwegian peer review "National strategy to prevent and tackle homelessness" (2006) were interested in transferring Housing First approach, hostel quality agreements and establishment of coordinating or implementation agency. Other countries often emphasized the difficulties of a transfer and differences between national contexts (e.g. differences in relation to political commitment; cooperation between ministries and local government organisations; housing market structures).

Meanwhile, the participants of Finish and Portuguese peer reviews were quite positive about transferring the approach presented. The Portuguese homelessness strategy stood out as the fist initiative to adopt a national strategy among the Southern EU countries, since most of the national homelessness strategies so far had been found in Northern and Western Europe (e.g. Norway, Denmark)[74]. It was felt to provide a useful model for other Member States; particularly those which do not as yet have a national strategy on homelessness (i.e. Spain, Poland and Hungary)[75]. The Spanish representative said that the peer review was very important for them as Spain was in the planning phase for such a strategy. Similarly, Polish representatives were interested in the technical and organisational coordination of the Portuguese strategy development in order to facilitate the establishment of homelessness strategy in Poland; while Hungarian representatives were interested in the ways to meet the conditions for a national strategy to be fully implemented (e.g. particularly in the way to involve the relevant stakeholders). The participants from Ireland, which adopted a national homelessness strategy for 2008 – 2013, expressed interest in cross-sectoral approach and mentioned that transferability might be potentially facilitated by the fact that there is a huge media and political interest in the issue.

The Finish peer review, which also focused on the development and assessment of national strategy on homelessness, attracted more "advanced" countries in the field which already had national homelessness strategies (e.g. France, Norway, Sweden, and the Netherlands) or were at

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[73] Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2010:28.

[74] Denmark also developed and published a new *Homelessness Strategy* in 2009.

[75] The former did not have a national homelessness strategy at the time of the meeting; while the latter recently has developed a comprehensive government-commissioned homelessness strategy, due to the lack of the political support it was not yet adopted at the governmental level.

the stage of implementing (e.g. Portugal) or developing (e.g. Hungary)[76] them. France and Netherlands expressed interest in the Housing First approach, defining it as innovative instrument to be tested, while Portuguese representatives acknowledged that the development of their own strategy was partially inspired by the Finish one and also appreciated the Housing First approach.

1.2.4. Children and families

Potential tutors. In the area of children and families United Kingdom and Germany hosted more than one peer review. All but one peer review in this thematic area was mentioned as presenting potentially transferable practice[77] and two of them – German peer review on local alliances for the family (2004) and Italian peer review on prevention of risks of exclusion of families with difficulties (2005) – were distinguished by at least four peer countries in this respect (Annex 3).

Potential learners. Among the peer countries Hungary stands out since its representatives participated in four peer reviews. In addition, the representatives from Portugal, Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Malta, Lithuania and Serbia attended three peer reviews each. However, there was little overlap between the peer reviews in terms of participating countries. Among the countries which attended the highest number of peer reviews in this thematic area, three expressed their intensions to transfer the policies discussed more than twice (i.e. Hungary, Lithuania and Cyprus).

Learning content. Parts of practice presented during German peer review (2004) were considered transferable by the Cypriot participants due to the fact that their country is already advanced in this area (e.g. specific points are already applied, framework conditions for a transfer of certain aspects exist). Similarly, Hungarian and Slovak representatives considered transferring *Carrier and Family Audit*, emphasizing that similar scheme already operate (Slovakia) or that they have started cooperating with the host country in order to adopt it to local conditions (Hungary). The participants from Estonia, which were more interested in *Local Alliances for Family*, mentioned the lack of strong civil society in their country as an important obstacle (it was also pointed out by the Slovak representatives). As for the other obstacles, the participants from Austria mentioned that different strands of work are carried out in isolation from each other.

When it comes to the peer review "Preventing the risks of exclusion of families with difficulties" (Italy 2005), Ireland was particularly favourable towards transferring the Italian approach. Irish representatives underlined that similar model of community-level social work exists in Ireland, so "transferability of good practices would not present any significant problem". Meanwhile, Poland, Romania and Cyprus expressed their interest in transferring such measures as family rooms, foster care model, partnerships with NGOs.

1.2.5. Promoting active inclusion

Potential tutors. Peer reviews promoting active inclusion were numerous and often touched on multiple key themes (12 out of 16). They were predominantly hosted by Belgium (2005, 2008, and 2010), Sweden (2004, 2006), Norway (2009, 2010) and Spain (2007, 2009). The majority of the peer reviews in this thematic area were identified as having transferable practices by the participating countries and in some cases several peer countries expressed their intention to transfer the parts of the policies presented: Germany 2008-Nov, Norway 2009, and United Kingdom 2009 (Annex 3).

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[76] For more details see: Synthesis report, Finish peer review "The Finnish national Programme to reduce long-term homelessness", 2010.

[77] Similarly to the Austrian peer review (2009) from the thematic area of homeless and housing exclusion, the transferability aspects were not discussed during the German peer review (2009(2)) due to the different aim of the review (i.e. discuss a policy reform).

Potential learners. Generally, a big number of countries attended many peer reviews in this thematic area. For example, Finland, the Netherlands, Poland, Cyprus and Malta participated in six peer reviews each; while, Slovenia, Greece, Latvia and Ireland were present in five peer reviews each. Two of the host countries also attended relatively high number of the peer reviews promoting social inclusion: Spain participated in four peer reviews hosted by other countries, while Norway attended three of them. Among the countries, which attended the highest number of peer reviews promoting active inclusion, Poland and Malta were single out as countries which expressed their intentions to transfer parts of the practice presented more often than other participants.

Learning content. As for the practices presented in German peer review on reintegration of women into the labour market (2008-Nov), Cypriot and Polish representatives particularly appreciated the holistic approach. The participants from Luxembourg and Malta were more interested in particular elements or initiatives. For example, representatives from Luxembourg emphasized that such initiative as networking exercise could be highly productive in such a small country as theirs.

The participants of the peer review hosted by the United Kingdom (2009) agreed that it is necessary to look for new ways to promote more active participation of local authorities. The Bulgarian representatives agreed that the model presented during this peer review could be applied at least partially in their national context (e.g. partnership model); Lithuanians expressed interest in transferring comparative quantitative indicators. The Norwegian representatives, who underlined that their country already has a number of similar programmes in place, also found some aspects interesting such as increased awareness of spatial dimension, engagement of voluntary organisations, data sharing etc.

Similarly to the peer review hosted by the United Kingdom, the participants of the Norwegian peer review on active inclusion of vulnerable population (2009) agreed upon the importance of approaching inclusive policy on the labour market. However, most of them mentioned significant challenges to transfer the practice presented. For example, Austrian representatives underlined that it would "meet resistance and could not work due to legal, organisational, budgetary and psychological barriers"; while the participants from Poland mentioned that the organisation of social services and economic context in their country is different and emphasized the need to conduct an in-depth analysis of solutions applied in Norway, also "in terms of their possible introduction as part of newly designed solutions to be applied in Poland".

1.2.6. Over-indebtedness and financial exclusion

Potential tutors. In general, there was little commonality in three peer reviews in this thematic area (see Deliverable 2, Section 1.3). Unsurprisingly, very few patterns were noticed regarding the learning direction and content. All three peer reviews were hosted by different countries (Ireland 2004, Netherlands 2006, and Belgium 2010) and only the Irish peer review on budgeting service (2004) was mentioned as having transferable practice by a number of participants.

Potential learners. Only two countries participated more than once in these peer reviews: Luxembourg (Ireland 2004, Netherlands 2006) and Netherlands (Ireland 2004, Belgium 2010). The latter also hosted one of the peer reviews on debt issues, as mentioned above.

Learning content. Slovenian and Danish representatives expressed their interest in adopting similar model to the one presented during the Irish peer review (2004). The former was interested in launching a pilot project in an urban area of the country; the latter intended forwarding the proposals to the Minister regarding debt relief schemes. Meanwhile, the participants from Germany and Hungary considered adopting some elements of the model presented to local circumstances (e.g. client data collection; private-public partnerships), expressing serious reservations about the possibility to transfer it to countries with decentralized administrative structures (Germany) or were such responsibilities are devolved

to regional or municipal level (Hungary). As indicated by the German respondents during the *impact evaluation*, a feasibility study was commissioned by a German ministry, which aimed to start pilot projects based on Irish (and Dutch) experiences adapted to the German situation.

1.2.7. Ageing and providing adequate and sustainable pensions

Potential tutors. Ageing and providing adequate and sustainable pensions has been a theme of interest of six peer reviews, hosted by six different countries (Belgium 2006, Sweden 2007, Finland 2007, Poland 2008, Germany 2010 and United Kingdom 2010). Four participating countries considered transferring the practices presented during the Finish peer review (2007)[78] and two countries expressed their intensions to transfer the policy discussed during the Swedish one (2007). Interestingly, both peer reviews were organised by the Nordic countries.

Potential learners. One can distinguish Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany and Portugal as active participants since they attended three peer reviews each. The former three also expressed their intentions to transfer parts of the practices presented (Annex 3).

Learning content. The Slovenian representatives were interested in the holistic approach towards active ageing presented during the Finish peer review (2007). Similar interest was expressed by the representatives from Estonia and the Netherlands. The former referred to the Finish approach as a guide to follow. The latter underlined that Finish model offers a broad range of approaches and experiences that seems also to be applicable by and are partially already used by the Netherlands. The German representatives, who also agreed that a Finish model is applicable in their national context, were more reserved regarding the potential transfer and emphasized the important differences between the two countries. According to the German representatives, labour market issues concerning the older workers "are discussed very controversially by the political parties, social partners, and the public"; meanwhile the Finish experience was based on a broad consensus in the society regarding this issue. Similarly, the Romanian representatives did not see the potential of transferring the practice encouraging the re-involvement of older specialised people in the economy, because "the politicians are not aware (yet) about the potential" of such programmes[79]. Thus the dissemination of the information gathered during the peer review could also serve for the awareness rising on the issue in the national contexts.

1.2.8. Health and long-term care

Potential tutors. Out of eleven peer reviews which addressed the issues related to health and long-term care, three were hosted by Germany (2008, 2009-Jun and 2010) and two by Sweden (2006, 2007). So these countries might be expected to have a particular interest in the field. The participants considered transferring the practices presented during two peer reviews: Swedish peer review on long-term care of elderly (Sweden 2007)[80] and Greek peer review on integration of health and long-term care services with labour market inclusion in mental health (2005). However, none of the two was identified as having transferable practice by more than two participating countries.

Potential learners. A number of countries attended at least five peer reviews each in this thematic area, namely: Portugal, Finland, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Poland and the Netherlands. The latter two also considered transferring the practice presented at least once.

Learning content. Although the peer countries were not interested in transferring the practices presented during the peer reviews dealing with healthcare and ageing issues, they found some

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[78] It can be explained by the fact that half of the peer reviews in this thematic area were devoted to discuss general EU policy problem and they were not discussed in terms of potential transferability (Belgium 2006, Poland 2008, and Germany 2010).

[79] Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2008:62.

[80] Similarly to the key area 'ageing and pensions', the remaining peer reviews were not discussed in terms of their potential transferability, because they were differed in terms of their aims (discussed a policy reform or a general EU policy problem).

interesting ideas. For example, the French peer review on Alzheimer's and other related diseases encouraged the participants to think about the need to develop special policy and practice for people with dementia[81].

1.2.9. Interaction of social, economic and employment services

Potential tutors. In this key theme, five peer reviews were organised between 2006 and 2010 by five different countries (France 2006, Belgium 2008, Germany 2008-Nov, United Kingdom 2009, and Norway 2010). Interestingly, all five peer reviews were mentioned by at least one participating country as having transferable practices; and two of them stood out in this regard – German peer review on reintegration of women into the labour market (2008-Nov) and the peer review addressing unemployment and child poverty, held in United Kingdom in 2009 (Annex 3), because they were mentioned by several countries.

Potential learners. Five peer countries can be distinguished in this thematic area as potential learners: Austria and Cyprus (attended three peer reviews each), as well as Luxembourg, Czech Republic and Greece (attended two peer reviews each). However, only two among them (i.e. Cyprus and Greece) considered transferring practices presented during the peer reviews more than once (Annex 3).

Learning content. Participants of the German peer review (2008-Nov) appreciated the holistic approach (e.g. Cyprus, Poland). In addition, the representatives from Luxembourg underlined that some elements of the German program "Perspektive Wiedereinstieg" could potentially be transferred to local gender equality services; while such initiatives as the provision of parental allowance during the period of parental leave, career breaks and the provision of higher childcare subsidies to parents making use of childcare services and the provision of more public childcare centres were considered as useful by the representatives from Malta. However, they recognised that a lot of progress has to be done in the field of gender equality before such a programme can be implemented efficiently[82].

Similarly, the participants of the peer review hosted by the United Kingdom agreed that the city strategy for tackling unemployment and child poverty could be applied at least partially in their national context (e.g. Bulgaria) or intended to borrow some interesting elements (e.g. Lithuania, Norway). For more details about the peer review hosted by the UK and Germany, see section *Promoting active inclusion* above.

1.2.10. Governance

Potential tutors. Out of nine peer reviews dealing with governance, two were hosted by France (2006, 2009). Meanwhile, Irish (2007), Danish (2007) and Finish (2010) peer reviews were distinguished by several peer countries as having transferable practices.

Potential learners. Representatives from France attended relatively high number of peer reviews in this thematic area in addition to the two peer reviews hosted by their home country. Similarly to Bulgarian, Hungarian, Irish, Norwegian and Belgian participants, they were present in three peer reviews. Furthermore, the participants from France as well as the participants from Malta and the United Kingdom expressed their intentions to transfer the policies discussed during the peer reviews more than once.

Learning content. Five participating countries found the approach presented in the Irish peer review (2007) highly relevant to their national contexts. However, all of them mentioned important obstacles and difficulties: some expressed the need to change important conditions (e.g. Hungary), to associate the people experiencing poverty to the national bodies working on this topic (e.g. France) or to organise it at territorial level (e.g. Spain); others underlined that

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[81] Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2009:53.
[82] Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2009: 54.

the transfer will depend on the possibility for better recognition of the stakeholders in the consultation process (e.g. Bulgaria) and raised the question of scale and political set-up (e.g. United Kingdom).

The participants of the Danish peer review on social aspects of human trafficking (2007) expressed a general interest in the approach presented (e.g. Norway, Slovakia)[83]. Others considered transferring some elements (e.g. Poland) or underlined the need to take into consideration that situation of trafficking human beings differs in qualitative and quantitative terms in European countries (e.g. Greece).

Most of the participants of the Finish peer review on reduction of long-term homelessness (2007) were interested in transferring the approach presented (e.g. Slovenia, Estonia and the Netherlands). Meanwhile German participants were more sceptical regarding the potential transfer, underlining the lack of consensus in the society regarding this issue. They agreed that Germany can learn from the Finish experience about how to achieve a wide social consensus.

Summary: In this section we presented the information gained from the secondary sources about learning direction (*tutors* and *learners*) and content. Although the peer reviews were designed as a platform for mutual learning, it is rather difficult to determine whether the mutual learning actually has taken place. It is even more challenging to name those who have actually been learning and from whom. The limited sources did not allow us to make any far reaching conclusions, but some aspects are worth being mentioned and should be further explored during the empirical analysis.

Potential tutors. From the analysis of the "attendance records" we distinguished such countries as Germany, France, Spain, Belgium and the United Kingdom, as potential *tutors*, because they were more active in hosting peer reviews than other countries.

The evaluation data showed that several peer reviews were perceived by the participants as particularly successful in terms of mutual learning, namely: the Belgian peer review on social economy (2008), the Hungarian peer review on social inclusion of children in disadvantaged rural environment (2010), the Norwegian peer review on active inclusion of vulnerable people (2009) and the Swedish peer review on integrated services in rehabilitation (2006). The latter two were also highly assessed in the impact evaluation regarding the usefulness of the peer review in the policy development. Given the high scores in the *immediate* and *impact assessments*, these host countries can be potentially regarded as *tutors* by the participants who attended these meetings.

Some evidence indicated that Belgium and Norway were willing to play a role of a *tutor* in the peer reviews *promoting active inclusion*[84], while France and United Kingdom preferred hosting the peer reviews on *governance*[85] issues and *children and families*[86] respectively. Denmark was mainly willing to share its experience with the other countries on *quality and accessibility of social services*[87] and Spain was likely to take up the role of a *tutor* in the area of *integration of ethnic minorities and immigrants*[88]. Meanwhile, Germany and Sweden can be distinguished as potential *tutors* in several key areas[89].

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[83] For example, Norwegian representatives recognized that many parts of the Danish policy on social aspects of human trafficking are very similar to those used in Norway and stressed that there is a substantial potential for the two countries to learn from each other's experiences.

[84] See the following peer reviews: Belgium 2005, 2008 and 2010; Norway 2009, 2010.

[85] See the following peer reviews: France 2006, France 2009-Dec.

[86] See the following peer reviews: United Kingdom 2006, 2009.

[87] See the following peer reviews: Denmark, 2005, 2009.

[88] Four peer reviews on *integration of ethnic minorities and immigrants* and two on *promoting active inclusion* were held in Spain.

[89] A number of peer reviews hosted by Sweden touched upon three key themes: *quality and accessibility of social services* (2004, 2006, and 2007), *promoting active inclusion* (2004, 2006) and *health and long-term care* (2006, 2007). Similarly, several German peer reviews were devoted to discuss the issues related to *children and families* (2004, 2009-Dec) and *health and long-term care* (2008-Jun, 2009-Jun, and 2010-Jan).

The analysis of Member States' comments demonstrated that a number of the peer reviews were distinguished by several participating countries as having transferable practices[90]. The participants relatively often talked about the potential transfer during the peer reviews hosted by France, Spain and the United Kingdom. One can also single out Finland, Ireland and Norway, because despite relative small number of the peer reviews hosted, they were frequently mentioned by participants as having transferable practice. Meanwhile, two active host countries (Germany and Belgium) were distinguished by the participants in this respect less often than previously mentioned countries, because they hosted many peer reviews on general EU issues or policy reforms and the transferability aspect was not discussed by the participants[91].

Potential learners. The fluctuations in "records of attendants" indicated that such countries as Finland, Hungary, Romania, the United Kingdom and Luxembourg attended more peer reviews than the rest of the peer countries. On the one hand one could presume that they often took up the role of a *learner*. One the other hand, the analysis of the results of evaluations and the peer countries' comments showed that the learning directions can be divers. Therefore it is likely that some of these countries were seeking to share their experience in a specific area with the host country on an equal basis or to promote their own approaches, as well as to learn from the other peer countries. In other words, they could be considered equally as *learners* and as *tutors*.

Some differences in terms of interest in the particular topics were noticed while analysing the "attendance records" of the peer countries. Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, Germany and Finland attended more peer reviews than other countries in the area of *integration of ethnic minorities and immigrants*. Denmark, Luxembourg, Slovenia and Hungary were particularly willing to learn how about the ways to tackle *homelessness and housing exclusion;* the latter one was also particularly interested in the key theme *children and families.* A number of countries were active participants of the peer reviews on *healthcare* and *pensions;* among them one can distinguish Portugal, Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Finland, Ireland and the United Kingdom, as well as Czech Republic and Estonia. The analysis of the "attendance records" also indicated that Cyprus, Malta, Finland, Poland and the Netherlands were likely to attend the peer reviews promoting *active inclusion*; the latter also seemed particularly willing to learn about the *quality and accessibility of social services* (similarly to Portugal and Lithuania). The *interaction of social, economic and employment policies* was of particular interest to Austria and Cyprus; meanwhile such countries as Belgium, France, Bulgaria, Hungary, Ireland and Norway potentially were seeking to learn more about *governance* issues.

Although the "attendance records" indicated that several peer countries frequently attended peer reviews in the same thematic area, it did not mean that they necessarily met more often. To be more precise, most of them attended different peer reviews in the same thematic area. In addition, the secondary data does not provide much evidence of networks established between the participants based on the peer reviews meetings in the specific thematic areas. In this respect the analysis of secondary sources allowed us to single out Finland and Portugal in the thematic area of *homelessness*. As reported by the peer review managers, the close ties were developed between the officials and the thematic experts in the Finish and Portuguese peer reviews (2010)[92].

The analysis of the Member States' comments indicated that some countries were more likely to express intensions to transfer a practice presented then others. It seemed that the representatives from Hungary, Poland, Malta, Cyprus or Latvia used such expression as "potentially transferable" more often than the representatives from Belgium, Finland, Sweden or Italy. It is possible that some of them tended to perceived themselves as learners (e.g. new

[90] These peer reviews were mainly hosted by the following countries: Austria, Czech Republic, Demark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Portugal and United Kingdom.

[91] Four peer reviews were devoted to discuss general EU policy problem (Belgium 2006, 2007, Germany 2008, Germany 2009-Jun) and one aimed at discussing a policy reform (Germany 2009-Dec).

[92] Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2010:28.

Member States)[93] or were likely to over-use such expression as "potentially transferable", although they did not clearly see such a potential.

Learning direction. Although the analysis of the peer review documents indicated that in initial years most of the participants perceived the peer reviews as a mean of learning about a policy in a particular host country[94], as the peer reviews evolved, the peer countries were often named as tutors by other participants[95]. In other words, the peer reviews not only allowed peer countries to learn from the host country but they also allow the peer countries to learn from each other and the host country to learn from the participating countries. They provided an opportunity to learn about the on-going attempts in other peer countries to transfer the practice presented by the host country or to share experiences with the host country on equal basis (see Box 3).

Learning content. In their comment papers majority of the countries often referred to a practice discussed as interesting or indicated a number of useful ideas. Some of them expressed rather clearly their intensions to use/transfer the ideas discussed and in most cases they referred rather to specific elements (e.g. client data collection; private-public partnerships) than considered transferring the practice presented as a whole. The content analysis also disclosed that some of the countries referred to activities that are already underway, while in other cases they mentioned only an intention to take the example studied in the peer review into consideration for national policy development.

Very frequently the Member States mentioned important constrains that made transfers difficult, particularly emphasizing the differences in terms of division of responsibility between national and regional/local institutions, budgetary constraints, strength of the NGO sector etc.). In other words the participants acknowledged that peer reviews gave not only insight into positive examples, but also (e.g. by site visit, discussions) provided important information about implementation aspects, conditions needed to carry out such models (be it regarding financing, institutional context, commitment needed etc.). The policies or programmes presented not only served as an inspiration in concrete terms to other countries, they contributed to avoiding policy experiments if a particular peer country did not fulfill the necessary preconditions[96].

2. Features conducive to mutual learning

In this section we aimed at answering if any of the particular features of the peer review process facilitated the mutual learning based on evaluations results and content analysis of the peer review documents. First, we explored the results of the peer review assessments; second, we focused on the obstacles identified by the peer countries during the peer review meeting.

Relying on the results of *immediate* and *impact evaluations* (Map 8, Deliverable 1), we analysed if the peer reviews which were evaluated as very useful in terms of mutual learning by most of the participants also received higher assessments regarding such aspects the choice of the theme, quality of the contributions (papers, discussions, presentations) and organisational aspects (efficiency of organisation, balance of timing etc.) and *vice versa*. After having tried several approaches, we decided to focus on eight peer reviews, which were identified as outliers regarding their usefulness in terms of mutual learning, as assessed by participants: United Kingdom 2006, Sweden 2006, Germany 2009-Jun, Norway 2009, which scored above 90 pct. in this aspect; and France 2009-Dec, Austria 2008, Belgium 2007 and Belgium 2006, which scored below 70 pct.

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[93] Randma-Liiv, Tiina and Riin Kruusenberg, "West-East policy transfer: motives, scope, role models and agents", IRSPM Conference , Panel 7: International Policy Learning and Transfer in Public Administration, Berne, 7-9 April 2010:3.

[94] Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2006:54.

[95] Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2008:40.

[96] See Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2007:69; Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2008: 48.

Generally, the participants of these peer reviews evaluated the *choice of themes* very positively and fluctuations between the outliers were not significant[97]. No considerable differences were noticed between them when it comes to the content and readability of the *discussion, host, peer and stakeholder papers (immediate evaluation),* as well as the usefulness of the *discussion paper* and *peer country comment papers (impact evaluation)*. The results of evaluations, however, indicated that the quality of *discussions* and *presentations* potentially had an impact on the general perception of the usefulness of the peer review in terms of mutual learning. Although the participants were generally satisfied with the quality of presentations and discussions, the peer reviews hosted by the United Kingdom, Germany 2009-Jun and Norway were assessed positively by 85-95 pct. of participants; while Belgian (2007), Austrian (2008) and French (2009-Dec) ones received positive evaluations from about 60-70 pct. of the respondents.

As for the organisational aspects, the peer reviews were similarly assessed when it comes to *logistical arrangements* and *meeting venue*[98], but there was a significant variation between them in terms of *efficiency of organisation*, *cost-effectiveness of the process* and *timing*. The peer reviews hosted by the United Kingdom (2006), Sweden (2006) and Norway (2009) received very positive evaluations from more than 90 pct. of participants regarding these aspects; while others received such assessment from about 65-75 pct. of respondents. Interestingly, the peer review meetings, which were considered as particularly useful by the participants, usually had a *site visit* organised and majority of the participants (around 90 pct.) found it particularly useful (United Kingdom 2006, Sweden 2006, and Norway 2009). It indicates that efficient organisation contributes at least partially to the positive evaluation of the usefulness of the peer review in terms of mutual learning, as well as site visit may provide the participants with very useful information about the implementation of the programmes on the ground.

Despite these findings from the *immediate* and *impact evaluations*, there was very little evidence in the comment papers that the participants explicitly mentioned certain organisational features of the peer review process as having or not having an impact on transferability of the practices presented, as demonstrated in Annex 3, Deliverable 1. Participants and peer review managers indicated a number of other important factors contributing to the success of the peer review such as *commitment of the host country*. On the one hand, they acknowledged that in the Belgian (2010), French (2009-May) and German peer reviews (2008-Jul; 2008-Nov) there was a strong sense of commitment by the organisers, which clearly contributed to a high degree to the success of these peer reviews. On the other hand, they underlined that Greek peer review on the social inclusion of Roma (2009) suffered from the sudden changes in the agenda, introduction of new subjects, which resulted in relatively lower scores in the evaluations[99]. However, despite persistent problems with timing and content, the peer reviews can still see quite good discussion and score particularly high in the efficiency of organisation question, as demonstrated in the results of the *impact evaluation* of the Danish peer review held in 2009[100].

The quality of the peer reviews might also suffer *from tensions or internal coordination problems* between the different ministries involved in the organisation of the meeting in the host country (e.g. Greece 2009) or *belayed nomination of the officials from the peer countries*. It can create serious challenges for the officials appointed to provide the peer countries comment papers. For example, the comment papers from the representatives from Spain, France, Austria and Luxembourg came about a week in advance to peer review meeting on long-term case in residential facilities held in Germany in late 2010; meanwhile, Malta did not provide a comment paper at all for the Spanish peer review on work incapacity (2010-Feb), because its' representative was nominated less than a week in advance to the meeting. Consequently, the richness of the discussions can at least partially suffer from these kinds of delays.

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[97] See Map 8a, Deliverable 1.
[98] Most of them were assessed very positively with an average score 80-85 pct.
[99] The balance and timing was assessed positively by about 50 pct. of participants and the quality of discussions and presentations apparently was also impacted by these changes
[100] Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2009: 26.

The *changes in political power* might also influence the quality of a peer review and consequently its outcomes. The example of the Romanian peer review on social service provision (2010) showed that the organisation of the peer review became rather challenging in the aftermath of the elections, because the relevant contact persons were unclear and the peer review lost some importance on the political agenda. Although such things as organisation of national elections might create serious challenges for the organisers, they do not always affect the meeting itself: the elections in Hungary that significantly changed the political environment in 2010 had very limited impact on the organisation of the peer review held in 2010, as underlined by the peer review managers in the Technical Report.

It was also agreed that the motivation and knowledge of participants was of particular importance. The peer review managers stated that French peer review on Alzheimer's and related diseases (2009-May) and Finish peer review on the national programme to reduce long-term homelessness (2010) clearly benefited from the fact that all participants were really *specialised in the field*[101].

Furthermore, the analysis of the peer review documents also indicated that the presence of the *stakeholders* was also often appreciated and encouraged. As an offset to the fact that there was only one stakeholder presented in the Norwegian peer review in 2009, the European Commission requested that three European stakeholders (Eurochild, ESN and COFACE) participated in the following peer review on the federal foundation *Mother and Child*, held in Germany[102].

In few cases the participants or peer review managers mentioned technical and linguistic challenges they faced during (or before) the meeting. Some of the meetings were affected by the interpretation services (e.g. Greece 2009; France 2009-Dec), the presentations provided in host countries language (e.g. Portugal 2010) or the fact that some of the countries were late to provide the English versions of the documents (e.g. Austria 2009; France 2009-Dec). Although these aspects did not have a major impact on the quality of the peer review, the improvements in these areas might help to smoother the preparation and the development of the meeting.

Summary: The analysis of the *immediate and impact evaluations* showed that the peer reviews, which were distinguished by the participants as particularly successful in terms of mutual learning, received slightly higher evaluations regarding the *discussions* and *presentations*. These differences in quality of presentations might be influenced by the seniority and position of the participating peer country officials and their involvement in and knowledge of the policy area being reviewed. Similarly, the expertise of the person who makes the presentation might also influence the quality of the *presentation* (e.g. the contributions made by independent experts might be perceived as more useful); while the good choice expertise of thematic expert might potentially contribute to the development of the *discussions*.

The analysis of the *evaluation* results also indicated that the peer reviews, which were distinguished by the participants as particularly successful in terms of mutual learning, received slightly higher evaluations regarding *logistical arrangements, efficiency of organisation* and *site visits*. As for the organisational aspects, they probably influence less directly the quality of the outcomes; however, the improvements might smoother the development of the peer review and contribute to the overall satisfaction of the participants. Meanwhile, a good site visit can also provide additional in-side information for the peer review participants about the way programmes function on the ground.

The analysis of the participants' and peer review managers' comments showed that such aspects as *commitment* of the host country (and peer countries), *political changes* in the countries, *competence* of the participants and *involvement of stakeholders*, as well as some *technical* and *linguistic barriers* can have an impact on the quality of discussions and peer

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[101] Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2009: 26.
[102] Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2009: 29.

review outcomes. These aspects should be further analysed in the ten case studies, conducted as part of Deliverable 4.

3. Transferability conditions

In this section we explored what can be learned from the peer review documents and evaluations about the extent the peer reviews have contributed to mutual learning and policy transfer. We aimed at answering the following questions:

- if the transferability is easier between "similar" Member States;
- if the transferability is easier in certain issue areas (social inclusion) than in others (pensions, healthcare);
- if the transferability is easier at the procedural level (the governance of domestic policies: horizontal and vertical coordination, evidence based policymaking etc.) than at the substantive level (actual policies: agenda setting, legislative changes etc.);
- if the new Member States (acceded after 2004) are more likely to consider a transfer;
- if the transferability is easier where national transmission mechanisms exit.

In order to provide tentative answers to these questions, we examined the "attendance records", results of the *impact* and *immediate evaluations* regarding such aspects as the usefulness of the outputs of the peer reviews, contribution to policy debates within participating countries among the others. In addition, we looked at the Member States' comments regarding the transferability of the practices presented in order to complement our analysis. Although this data set has serious limits (see *Introduction*), it still allowed us to provide some material for further investigation.

3.1. Is transferability easier between "similar" Member States?

According to Rose, lesson drawing is more likely the greater the equivalence of resources between the governments[103]. To examine if the transferability is easier between "similar" Member States in terms of institutional setup, we grouped the host and peer countries into five welfare regime types – Nordic, Continental, Anglo-Saxon, Southern European and Eastern European[104] – conventionally used in the literature.

First, we analysed if peer countries were more likely to participate in the peer reviews organised by countries, which share similar social security systems, similar governance structures, similar political power structures etc[105]. We relied on data gathered during the general overview of the peer reviews 2004-2010 (see Map 1, Deliverable 1)[106] and counted the times an individual Member State participated in the peer reviews, hosted by the countries, which belong to the same welfare regime type[107]. We also counted the times it attended the peer reviews, organised in the countries, which represent other welfare regime types. The results are presented in Annex 1. While analysing the participation rates, one should bear in mind that it is not only based on the interests of the peer countries. Baring in mind that only up to ten peer countries can participate in each peer review and taking into account the Member States' preferences, the final list of participants is prepared by the European Commission.

[103] Rose, *Lesson-Drawing in Public Policy*. Chastham NJ: Chatham house, 1993: 118-42.

[104] *Nordic model*: Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway; *Atlantic (Anglo-Saxon) model*: Ireland, the United Kingdom; *Central European (Continental) model:* Germany, Austria, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg; *Southern European model:* Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Cyprus, Malta; *Eastern European model*: Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Bulgaria.

[105] It should be noted, however, that this typology does not capture changes across time and in some cases a further research is necessary, accounting for regime/governance transformations.

[106] The data presented in Map 1, Deliverable 1 was aggregated based on the information provided on the web-site of the peer review programme and final technical reports by the service contractor assisting the European Commission and Member States in carrying out peer reviews.

[107] Similar approach was used by Ballester and Papadopoulos. See: Ballester and Papadopoulos, 2009.

Second, we explored if the peer countries were more likely to express their intentions to transfer a policy presented during those peer reviews, which were held in a host country from the same welfare regime type. We analysed the Member States' comments regarding the transferability of the practices presented[108] in order to see how often an individual Member State reported an intention to transfer a policy presented during the peer reviews, hosted by the countries, which share similar social security and governance systems. We also analysed how often countries expressed an interest in transferring the practices discussed during the peer reviews organised in the countries, which represent other welfare regime types. The results are presented   in

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[108] We relied on the data gathered during the analysis of transferability of practices discussed during peer reviews (Map 9, Deliverable 1).

Annex **2**.

Analysis shows little evidence that the peer countries were more likely to participate in the peer reviews, hosted by the countries from the same regime type. Only Luxembourg can be single out in this respect: the majority of the peer reviews attended by the representatives of Luxembourg were hosted by France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany or Austria (12 out of 17). Potentially the similarity of the regimes and the geographic proximity influenced the choices of the representatives from this country. In addition, the analysis also shows little proof that the peer countries were more likely to signal their willingness to transfer a practice hosted by a country which belongs to the same welfare regime type. However, there is some limited evidence that countries considered transferring practices presented by the host countries from the same regime type (see

Box *5*). It seemed that the similarities between the peer and host countries were perceived as important pre-condition for transferability by a number of countries (e.g. Austria in German peer review 2004). Furthermore, the resemblance of approaches and advancement of a country in a specific field were also perceived as important factors (e.g. Sweden in Norwegian peer review 2006).

Box 5. Learning direction by the welfare regime type

Nordic model. During the Danish peer review on human trafficking (2007) Norwegian representatives underlined that there is a substantial potential for the two countries to learn from each other's experiences, both policies stress on social aspects etc[109]. A number of aspects of Norwegian strategy to prevent homelessness (2006) seemed to be quite easily transferable to the Swedish representatives, because two countries have many similarities (e.g. decentralised structure where responsibility for social activities is vested at regional or local level)[110]. It was also acknowledged that on-going homelessness project in Sweden was very similar to the Norwegian project leading to the strategy presented during the peer review[111].

Anglo-Saxon model. The representatives from the United Kingdom agreed that the social inclusion forum presented during the Irish peer review (2007) could be transferred to their country, because the basis for transference exists[112].

Continental model. The Austrian representatives were interest in transferring the experience of the local alliances for the family, presented during the German peer review (2004), because of similar structures. The participants from Luxembourg were interested in transferring another policy presented by Germany (2008) destined to facilitate the re-entry into the labour market for the female population. They underlined that the employment situation in Luxembourg is quite similar and Luxembourg counts already a number of projects with similar aim[113]. They also considered transferring the methods of identification of substandard housing presented during the French peer review "National action plan against substandard housing" (2007) and quantified targets, presented during the peer review "Measuring the impact of active inclusion" (France 2009-Dec).

Southern European model. Italian policy to prevent the risks of exclusion (2005) was particularly appreciated by Cypriot representatives[114]; Spanish municipal programme of shanty towns' eradication (2006) was considered as possibly transferable by the Portuguese representatives, because of similarities between the target groups[115]; while the participants from Malta expressed interest in the bottom-up approach presented during the Portuguese peer review "Socio-community development" (2005) and underlined that several projects could be implemented in Malta.

Eastern European. Romania and Lithuania considered transferring practices presented during the peer reviews hosted by the Czech Republic ("Field social work programmes", 2005) and Hungary ("Basic social services in rural settlements", 2005) respectively. The former mentioned that the complex roles assigned to the social workers in the Czech model could be used in a larger scale in the Romanian system of service provision; the latter considered transferring the village caretaker model, developed in Hungary, on a temporary of modified basis until a more comprehensive service provision is in place.

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[109] Minutes, Danish peer review "Social aspects of human trafficking", 2007:31.

[110] They also recognised the existence of such differences as different level of political commitment to this issue, differences in cooperation of the ministries and the local government organisations as well as in housing market structures. See: Synthesis report, Norwegian peer review "National strategy to prevent and tackle homelessness", 2006:8.

[111] Country Paper, Sweden, Norwegian peer review "National strategy to prevent and tackle homelessness", 2006:3.

[112] Comment paper, United Kingdom, Irish peer review "The NAPInclusion Social Inclusion Forum", 2007:4.

[113] Comment paper, Luxembourg, German peer review "Getting women back into the labour market", November, 2008:4.

[114] Synthesis report, Italian peer review "Preventing risks of exclusion of families with difficulties", 2005:36.

Similar aspects were mentioned by the peer countries, which acknowledged serious difficulties to transfer the practices presented to their national contexts. The participants underlined institutional constrains related to country's legal, political, social security systems as partially impeding transfer approaches adopted elsewhere. They frequently referred to different levels of centralisation. For example, the Spanish *Support Fund* was found constitutionally difficult for Germany to create, as this would interfere with the rights of the federal states. Commenting the transferability of the Spanish model, the representatives from Latvia underlined that it cannot be adopted in their country, because administrative units are still administratively weak and lacking the adequate human resources[116]. Other participants mentioned administrative problems (e.g. Greece in Sweden 2006), financial constrains (e.g. Slovenia in Netherlands 2004), different organisational arrangements (e.g. Slovakia in Belgium 2005) or diverging legal frameworks (e.g. Estonia in Greece 2005) as main obstacles. They also named such barriers to transfer as limited development of NGOs in their country (e.g. Latvia in Denmark 2005), lack of statistical data (e.g. Lithuania in Malta 2007), size of the country (e.g. smaller countries in Spain 2008) or absence of a particular target group (e.g. Estonia in Denmark 2005).

In addition, the content analysis of the Member States' comments also disclosed that some countries had other reasons than differences in institutional setup or welfare arrangements that stopped them from considering a transfer. The representatives from the Netherlands mentioned the unfavourable political climate as the main reason why they do not intend to discuss further different minimum income and social integration institutional arrangements (Belgian 2005). Another argument was given by Norwegian representatives during the Austrian peer review on *Clearing* (2004). They did not feel the need to establish a similar system and considered it as "a step backwards to give advice to disabled people only". Meanwhile the French representatives argued that the Dutch debt clearance procedure (2006) is not transferable due to different mentalities exist in France and the Netherlands. This indicates that political climate and public opinion, as well as level of advancement of a peer country in a particular field can encourage or discourage the peer country to consider transferring parts of the practice presented.

All in all, the analysis of the Member States' comments shows a number of potential difficulties of taking over the ideas to other social and policy context. Countries often are in very different stages of development and situations are not always comparable. Differences in terms of division of responsibility between national and regional/local institutions, budgetary constraints and strength of NGO sector, as well as political climate and other institutional obstacles were especially distinguished by the Member States' representatives as making the policy transfer less likely to occur. Even though the literature review did not bring strong evidence that peer countries were more likely to participate in the peer reviews hosted by the countries, which belong to the same welfare regime type, and were more likely to consider transferring practices presented, this needs to be cross-checked further during the empirical analysis.

### 3.2. Is transferability easier in social inclusion?

In order to answer if the transferability is easier in certain issue areas than in others, we explored if the participants were more likely to find the outcomes of the peer reviews on *social inclusion* more useful and the process more cost-effective than in the peer reviews devoted to *pensions* and *healthcare*. The summary assessments by themes are presented in Figure 2, which confirms a very good overall evaluation as provided by participants, with no significant differences between the key themes.

Due to some variation between the individual peer reviews, six of them were single out as outliers: the peer reviews hosted by Norway (2009), Sweden (2006) and the United Kingdom (2006) were evaluated positively by more than 90 pct. of participants on both aspects; while Austrian (2008), French (2009-Dec) and Portuguese (2005) peer reviews scored relatively

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[116] Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2009: 53.

lower than others[117]. The former three touched upon various topics[118], including ageing and pensions (Sweden 2006); while, the latter three promoted active inclusion and dealt with governance issues. This confirmed that the peer reviews dealing with pensions and healthcare issues received rather average evaluations.

Figure 2. Evaluation of usefulness of the peer reviews, by the key themes (results of the immediate evaluation)[119]
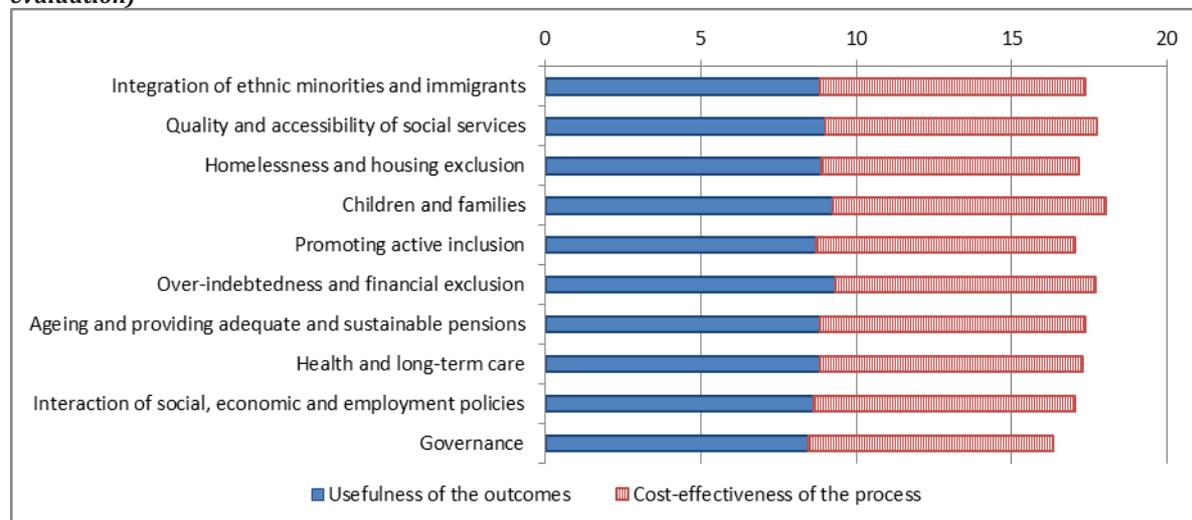
For more details see Map 8a, Deliverable 1.

We also looked at the results of the impact evaluation to cross-check these findings. We analysed if the participants found the information gained during the peer reviews on social inclusion more useful for policy development than during the peer reviews devoted to pensions and healthcare. The summary assessment demonstrates that retrospectively more than 80 pct. of participants found the information useful for policy development in their home countries and less than a half of respondents agreed that the peer review actually contributed to policy debate within their own country (Figure 3). Such themes as pensions and over-indebtedness were identified as (small) outliers: the former scored relatively lower and the latter – relatively higher. The relatively higher assessment of the peer reviews on over-indebtedness can be explained by the fact that only three meetings organised in this thematic area. In addition, the peer reviews on healthcare issues did not significantly differ from the ones devoted to pensions. These results seems to be in line with the initial presumptions (i.e. transferability is easier in social inclusion), but no decisive conclusions can be drawn given the very low response rate to the impact evaluation questionnaires.

We also looked for some patterns in the Member States' comments regarding the transferability of the practices presented[120]. It seemed that if the key theme was covered by a numerous peer reviews, the participants were more likely to express their intentions to transfer a policy presented and *vice versa*[121]. This might indicate that when countries have more opportunities to meet and discuss their policies and programmes, they are able to create informal ties, accumulate more knowledge about the practices discussed and therefore can be more likely to

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[117] The Austrian peer review (2008) was evaluated positively by 60-74 pct. participants; the French peer review (2009-Dec) received positive assessment from about 65-69 pct. of participants. Meanwhile the Portuguese peer review (2005) received only about 53 % of positive feedback to the question on usefulness of the outcomes and only 27 % of respondents found this peer review cost-effective.

[118] Such themes as children and families, quality and accessibility of social services, homelessness and promoting active inclusion.

[119] The questions selected were "yes" or "no" questions. In the figure we converted the answers to each of these questions into a decimal scale (answers 'yes' ranging from 90 to 100 per cent =10, answers 'yes' ranging from 80-89=9 … 0-10=1).

[120] We have made a cross-tabulation using the data of the Map 9 and Map 2, Deliverable 1. The former presented an overview of the key themes covered in 2004-2010 by a host country. The latter indicated the countries expressing the highest interest in transferring the practice discussed by a host country.

[121] There were some peer reviews in each thematic area, which were mentioned as having transferable practices by a number of participants. For more details see Section 1, Deliverable 1.

consider transferring parts of it in the future. So the differences between the peer reviews devoted to social inclusion, pensions and healthcare in the assessments can be partially explained by the differences in the number of peer reviews organised in each thematic area.

Figure 3. Evaluation of usefulness of the peer reviews, by the key themes (results of the impact evaluation)[122]
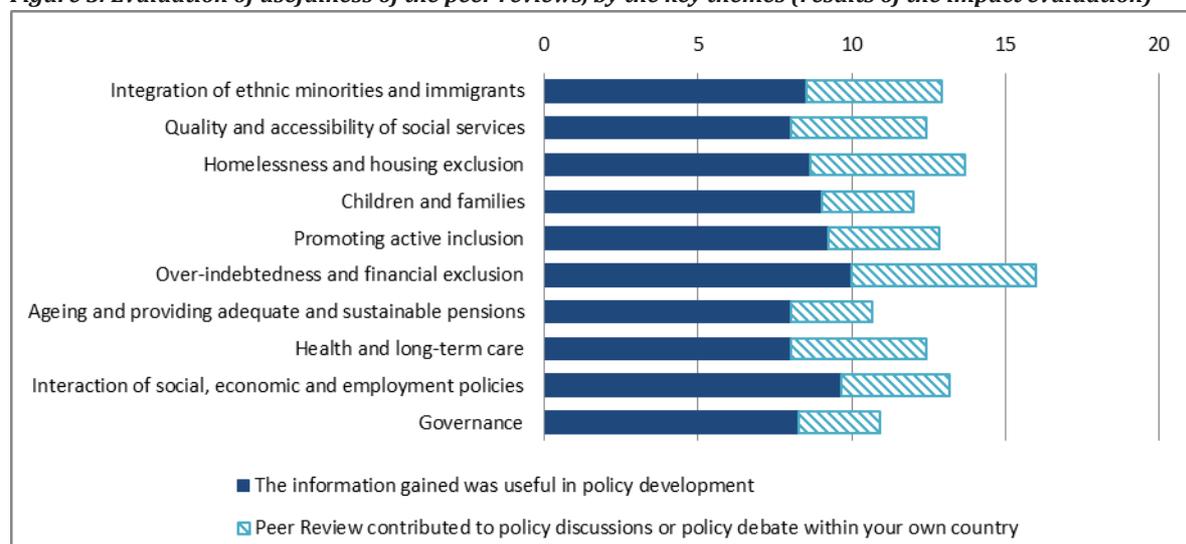
For more details see Map 8b, Deliverable 1.

All in all, there was little evidence that the peer reviews devoted to social inclusion issues were perceived as more useful in terms of mutual learning by the participants. Although most of the peer reviews dealing with pensions and healthcare issues received rather average evaluations, only very few were distinguished as outliers. Given the serious limitations of this data set (see *Introduction*), no fare reaching generalisations can be made and this aspect needs to be addressed during the case studies (Deliverable 4).

3.3. Is transferability easier at the procedural level?

A number of scholars have tried to trace the influence of OMCs on the domestic policies and some of them provided evidence of changes in domestic policies both in substantive and procedural terms[123]. To answer if the transferability is easier at the procedural level than policy substance, an empirical analysis is needed to trace if the peer reviews in the social protection and social inclusion programme had some impact on the domestic policies at all. However, at this stage of analysis some ideas for further development can be drawn from the peer review documents.

We conducted literature review on 2004-2010 peer reviews and concluded that a number of general policy issues were addressed, namely: necessity of common data and information; measures, indicators, monitoring and evaluation; division of responsibility between national, regional and local levels; mainstreaming of issues across policy areas; cooperation and coordination between stakeholders (see section 1.4, Deliverable 2).

Necessity of *common data and information* was particularly underlined by the participants during the peer reviews on such key themes as *integration of ethnic minorities and immigrants[124]*, *children and families[125]* and *governance[126]* among others. Similarly, the

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[122] The questions selected were "yes" or "no" questions. In the figure we converted the answers to each of these questions into a decimal scale (answers 'yes' ranging from 90 to 100 per cent =10, answers 'yes' ranging from 80-89=9 ... 0-10=1).

[123] Zeitlin, J. "The Open Method of Co-ordination and reform of national and social policies: influences, mechanisms, effects", in M. Heidenreich and J. Zeitlin (eds), Changing European Employment and Welfare Regimes: The Influence of the Open Method of Co-ordination on National Reforms, London: Routledge, 2009: 214-245.

[124] See the following peer reviews: France 2004, Spain 2007, Spain 2008, Greece 2009, Hungary 2010, and Spain 2010-Oct.

[125] See the following peer reviews: Germany 2004, United Kingdom 2006, United Kingdom 2009, and Hungary 2010.

importance of adequate *monitoring and evaluation*, as well as the *development of proper measures and indicators* was indicated in the majority of the peer reviews, which spilled over numerous key themes. Several countries even indicated interest in transferring the measures or indicators developed elsewhere. For example, the representatives of Malta considered partially adopting the indicators on youth poverty presented during the French peer review (2009-Dec); the participants from Lithuania expressed their interest to transfer comparative quantitative indicators used in the *City Strategy* (United Kingdom 2009) and the representatives from Estonia hoped to introduce the similar methods to assess the needs of young people with special needs, presented in the peer review on *Clearing* (Austria, 2004).

Another important issue covered in the peer review meetings was the *division of responsibility between national, regional and local levels.* A number of them specifically focused on local-level initiatives in the area of social policy[127]. The *cooperation and coordination between stakeholders* was also a key aspect of more than a half of the peer reviews. Some countries were particularly interested in developing the cooperation with non-governmental stakeholders as service providers (e.g. Germany in Ireland 2004); others expressed their intentions to include the non-governmental stakeholders more actively in the policy process as a whole, after participating in a peer review covering this aspect (e.g. Bulgaria in Spain and in Ireland 2007).

Some of the peer reviews also touched on some more fundamental issues, such as balance between targeting policies to certain groups in need and providing universal services to all, as well as definitions of social issues[128]. Most of the peer reviews which touched upon the *definitional problems* were concentrated in the areas of homelessness[129] and indebtedness[130] among the others. The definitional issues were also important in the peer reviews covering such issues as disability, minimum income and quality of care[131]. The debate about the *balance between targeting and universalism* was re-emerged in about one third of the peer reviews covering all but one key theme[132], many of which focused on *integration of ethnic minority and immigrants.* Some of the peer reviews in this thematic area promoted a more universal idea of social inclusion as a way of addressing issues[133]. In contrast, other peer reviews argued for a targeted approach towards ethnic minorities[134] or subsets of this group such trafficked women[135] or as Roma[136]. Some of the peer reviews addressed the policies universally, but within specific geographic or social areas used more targeted measures[137].

To conclude, the analysis of the Member States' comments indicated that although some countries considered transferring policy substance, most of them were more likely to consider a transfer at procedural level. However, even if some of them seriously considered transferring elements of the practice presented, the differences in institutional frameworks, political and social situations can make the transfer process far from straight-forward or even impossible[138]. To confirm that more transfers were actually made at procedural level than policy substance, additional empirical information on "policy transfers" should be gathered. Thus the in-depth analysis of the ten case studies should bring more light on this aspect.

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[126] See the following peer reviews: Portugal 2005, France 2009-Dec, Spain 2010-Oct and United Kingdom 2011.

[127] See the following peer reviews: Sweden 2004, Czech Republic 2005, Hungary 2005, Malta 2007, among others.

[128] As demonstrated in Deliverable 2, at least 18 of the peer reviews touched on *definitional problems*.

[129] See the following peer reviews: United Kingdom 2004, Denmark 2005, France 2007, Austria 2009, Finland 2010 and Portugal 2010.

[130] See the following peer reviews: Ireland 2004, the Netherlands 2006.

[131] Definition of disability were discussed during the peer reviews hosted by Austria (2004) and Spain (2009); definition of minimum income during the peer reviews held in Belgium (2006, 2010); definition of quality of care was an issue in the Swedish peer reviews (2006, 2007).

[132] Only key theme *ageing and providing adequate and sustainable pensions* was not covered.

[133] See the following peer reviews: Sweden 2004, Spain 2007, and Spain 2010.

[134] See the following peer reviews: France 2004, Spain 2008, Norway 2010.

[135] See the following peer review: Denmark 2007.

[136] See the following peer reviews: Spain 2006, Greece 2009.

[137] See the following peer reviews: Czech 2005, Hungary 2010.

[138] See Stead, Dominic at al. "West-east policy transfer: the case of urban transport policy", in Healey, Patsy and Robert Upton '*Planning Ideas and Planning Practices*', Routledge, 2009.

3.4. Are new Member States more likely to consider a transfer?

Some scholars argued that drawing lessons from the Western Europe has often been seen by countries in Central and Eastern Europe as a way of catching up politically and economically[139]. They argue that due to uncertainties of policy making, some politicians might perceive a policy transfer as particularly attractive option and as the quickest solution for many problems without having to reinvent the wheel[140]. In other words, one could expect that the new Member States were more likely to transfer the policy models, concepts, ideas, goals and instruments from old Member States.

The literature review of the peer review documents showed that the data on "policy transfer" is very limited. Although at the beginning of the peer review in social protection and social inclusion programme there has been an effort to identify the cases of policy transfer on the basis of a questionnaire sent to peer review participants and telephone interviews, this exercise has not been repeated after 2005. Therefore, at this stage of analysis we can only relay on the analysis of the "attendance records" and content analysis of the Member States' comments on transferability of the practices presented.

The "attendance records" showed that the EU12 countries hosted fewer peer reviews than the EU15. Furthermore, some of them particularly active participants (e.g. Hungary and Romania), although the differences between the EU12 and EU15 countries were not really significant in terms of participation (see Figure 1). The content analysis of the Member States' comments also indicated that several EU12 countries (e.g. Poland, Hungary, Malta, Latvia and Cyprus) were referring to a potential transfer rather frequently, especially when compared to such countries as Belgium, Finland or Sweden (see **Erreur ! Source du renvoi introuvable.**). However, based on the secondary sources it is rather hard to say if the EU12 countries were actually more likely to consider a transfer or they were over-using such expressions as "potentially transferable" to fulfil a role of a leaner, as mentioned in *Section 1*. There were only limited evidence that some of the countries which mentioned their intentions to transfer a practice presented during the peer review meeting confirmed on-going transfer activities by telephone interviews with the peer review managers in late 2005 (Box 6).

Box 6. Example of a transfer: Latvia in Finish peer review 2004

> The comments of participants from Latvia regarding the transferability of the HYVE model during the peer review meeting: "The HYVE model would be of great relevance for Latvia in creating a system of social services that corresponds to local circumstances and needs. It also shows the way in which policy can move in a multi-actor direction and stresses the importance of research before initiating the policy and measures, and also during the project implementation process. Because of the unsatisfactory social services, HYVE could be a good model in Latvia. The first step would be piloting the model within a region"[141].
>
> The extract from the Technical Report referring to the interview with Latvian participants regarding the transferability of the HYVE model: "As a result of her participation in the peer review meeting in Finland on *Citizen's Social Support Networks*, Ms Maruta Pranka, peer country expert from Latvia, initiated a pilot project with the financial support of the ESF. The project is called *The possibilities to develop Social Support Networks to promote employment of social exclusion risk groups in Madona district.* The project has duration of seven months and is not yet finished"[142].

The results of the *impact evaluation* surveys also indicated that EU12 countries were more likely to report a transfer. In late 2005, the majority of the respondents, who mentioned a transfer, were from the new Member States. In this respect Hungary and Romania stood out as countries which reported a transfer most often. However, the explanations given by the respondents showed that besides the transfer of programmes or components of it, initiating and strengthening the policy debate in the peer countries, improvement of understanding of social

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[139] Rose, *Lesson-Drawing in Public Policy*. Chastham NJ: Chatham house, 1993: 118-42.
[140] Stead at al., 2009.
[141] Synthesis report, Finish peer review "Citizens' social support networks", 2004.
[142] Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2005:49.

exclusion issues, setting up of demand analysis, and a strengthening of the peer country's own approach were reported as transfer activities. In other words, the nature and quality of the reported transfer activities were very different in terms of scope, outreach, and persistence. Thus it is hard to say, if the EU12 countries were actually more likely to transfer the practices presented.

Table 1. Transfer of Host Country Programme or Components of it 2004-2005

		Transfers				
		Number	Transferred to			
Peer Reviews 2004	01/ Sweden 2004	0				
	02/ United Kingdom 2004	3	DK (2)	RO		
	03/ Austria 2004	2	EL	LT		
	04/ Netherlands 2004	0				
	05/ Finland 2004	5	LT	MT (2)	UK	not specified
	06/ France 2004	0				
	07/ Ireland 2004	4	DE	HU	UK (2)	
	08/ Germany 2004	5	AT (2)	CY	HU	MT
Peer Reviews 2005	01/ Italy 2005	0				
	02/ Denmark 2005	3	CZ	NL (2)		
	03/ Czech Republic 2005	2	SK (2)			
	04/ Hungary 2005	2	SI	RO		
	05/ Portugal 2005	0				
	06/ Greece 2005	3	EE	LV	PL	
	07/ Belgium 2005	3	EE	HU	RO	
Total		32				

Given the possible contradiction between the Member States' statements and actual transfers, as well as the limits of the secondary sources used by the research team (see *Introduction*) no decisive conclusions can be drawn. It is necessary cross-check during the case studies if the reported intentions to transfer parts of the policies presented lead to an actual transfer in any of the participating EU12 countries.

3.5. Are new Member States more likely to consider a transfer?

The question, if transferability is easier where national transmission mechanisms exist, is an empirical one. The data, necessary to answer it, will be collected during the ten case studies, conducted for the Deliverable 4. In order to provide some background material for the further analysis, we explored what can be learned from the peer review documents and evaluations regarding the transmission mechanisms and how this aspect can be operationalised.

We selected two questions from *impact evaluation* regarding the dissemination of information about the peer review meetings (see Box 7), because the extent to which participants of the peer review have subsequently disseminated information about or results from the peer review within their own Member States can indicate if such transmission mechanisms exist.

Box 7. Dissemination: selected questions from impact evaluation

In the *impact evaluation* questionnaire, the participants were asked if they have disseminated any information about the peer review/told others about the peer review:

- ... within their own organisation?
- ... to people in other organisations?

An aggregated answer for each of these questions was calculated as percentage of the participants, who answered "yes" to this question.

For more details see Map 8b, Deliverable 1.

The summarised results of assessments (by years) show that participants tend to disseminate the information about the peer review meeting first and foremost within their own

organisation. For example, in 2009 more than 90 pct. of participants shared the information gained with their colleagues; while around 65 pct. of respondents disseminated it to other organisations (Figure 4). There was also a variation in the assessments among individual peer reviews with some receiving rather low scores on these aspects (e.g. France 2007, Spain 2008), while others were assessed very positively (e.g. Sweden 2007, Greece 2009).

Figure 4. Dissemination of the peer review outcomes, results of the impact evaluation (by years)[143]
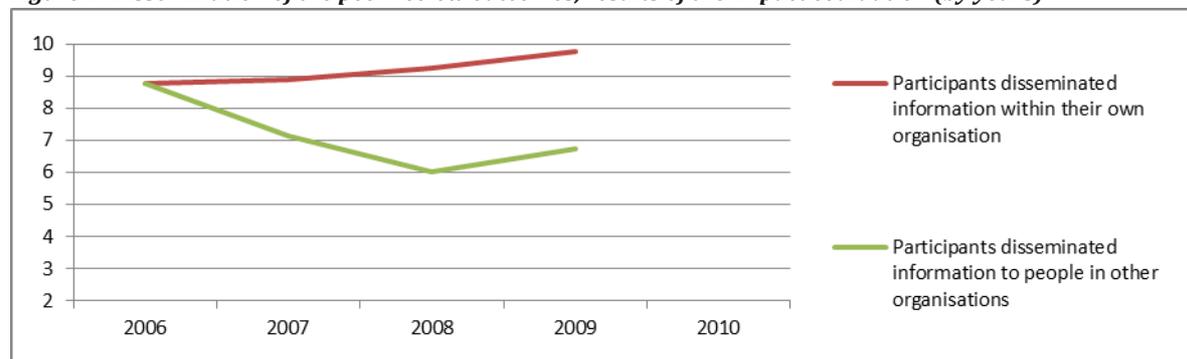
For more details see Map 8b, Deliverable 1

The analysis of assessments by the key themes did not reveal significant differences, although it also confirmed a very good overall dissemination of information about the peer review within the organisation and relatively less successful dissemination outside it. This indicates that the participants probably have less channels (or use them less) to disseminate the information outside their own organisation.

Figure 5. Dissemination of the peer review outcomes, results of the impact evaluation (by the key themes)[144]
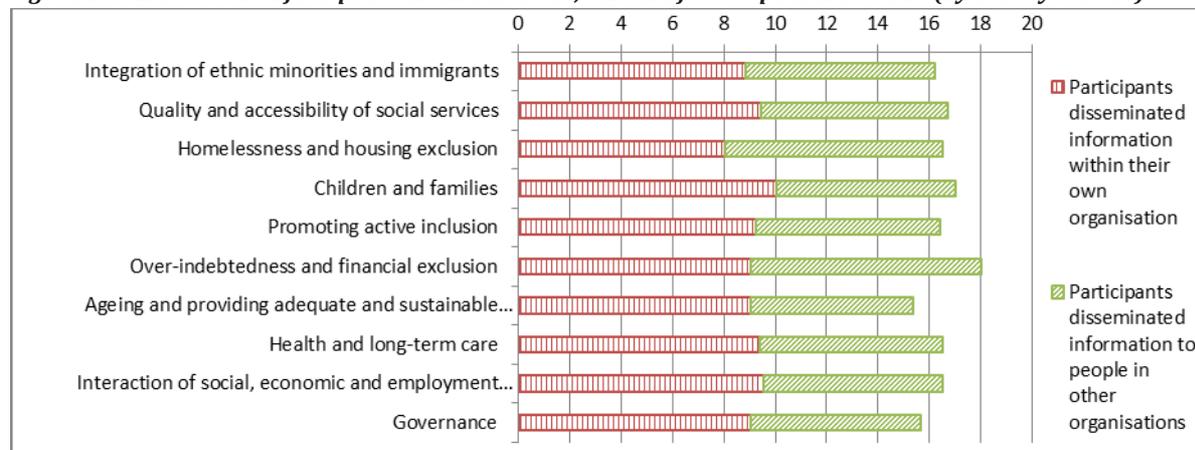
For more details see Map 8b, Deliverable 1

Although the secondary sources indicated the possible existence of dissemination channels, only in very few cases the participants specified what kinds of channels were used. For example, some peer countries gathered the relevant actors in their home country to give a presentation on the host country's practice (Box 8) and in some cases the dissemination of peer review documents was prompted by requests from colleagues or institutions in the country that approached the participants[145].

Box 8. Example of dissemination channels: "Local Alliances for the Family" in Germany and Austria

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[143] This was a "yes" or "no" question. In the figure we converted the answers into a decimal scale (answers 'yes' ranging from 90 to 100 pct. =10, answers 'yes' ranging from 80-89=9 … 0-10=1)

[144] This was a "yes" or "no" question. In the figure we converted the answers into a decimal scale (answers 'yes' ranging from 90 to 100 pct. =10, answers 'yes' ranging from 80-89=9 … 0-10=1)

[145] In the *impact evaluation* carried out in 2005 around 1/3 of respondents mentioned that their colleguages or institutions requested information from the peer review. See Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2005.

> The Austrian Peer country official invited one of the German participants in the peer review on reconciliation of work and family life (2004), Mr Jan Schröder, head of the service bureau of the "Local Alliances for the Family", to repeat his presentation in front of a broader audience of relevant Austrian actors in Vienna in March 2005[146]. As a result of the meeting in Vienna, a process of direct co-operation between the German and Austrian ministries was initiated, and as early as 22 June the official launch of the Austrian *Familienallianz* took place with more than 50 founding members including representatives of many private enterprises. As of autumn 2005, the *Familie und Beruf Management gGmbH* has been in operation in order to co-ordinate and facilitate the further development of the *Familienallianz*[147].

Based on the responses to the *immediate evaluation* questionnaires one could presume that the outreach of the peer review process in the Member States and especially in the ministries involved is not limited to the relatively small number of officials and experts who participate directly in the meetings[148]. However, some of the respondents' comments raise serious doubts about the successfulness of the dissemination. A number of them expressed critical remarks on this aspect and claimed that insufficient dissemination of the outputs and conclusions is one of the main weaknesses of the peer review process (see Box 9). They indicated that the peer reviews remained mainly a process by and for insiders and it is likely that many potential users of the peer review results at the domestic level remained unaware about the process and the outcomes.

Box 9. Extracts from participants' comments regarding the dissemination

> There is not a real dissemination of the outputs and conclusions and that the peer countries don't start real policy discussions on this topic"[149].
>
> "People involved in Peer Reviews should have contract with policy-makers within the European Commission and the European Parliament. The Peer Review team might make recommendations to other agencies within the EU that can lead to cross-country collaboration. Peer Reviews seem to have no consequences at the present"[150].
>
> "The key weakness is that the transferring process stops when participants go back home to their own countries"[151].
>
> The participants should be encouraged to "suggest (plan) how they will disseminate experience in their own country" and create "a public web page for feedback about dissemination (where, when, in what form and to what audience)"[152].

The peer review managers also acknowledged that significant improvements are needed to disseminate the peer review results beyond the restricted number of people who actually attend the meeting. They reported that after the 6 to 14 months between taking part in a review and the survey date, a relatively high number of participants (around 20%) could no longer be traced by e-mail or had changed their position or their ministry and were no longer involved in issues related to the peer review and some of them reported that they have had no insight into developments that arose from the peer review[153]. Given the high mobility of the country officials inside the institutions, additional efforts are needed to ensure that the information does not leave with the institution together with the official.

All in all the literature analysis showed that the results are disseminated in some of the institutions or organisations and to a lesser extent beyond it. However, it also indicated that there is a lot of room for improvements, especially to ensure that the right persons are reached in the Member States and the information is not being lost in several months after the meeting. In addition, the literature analysis allowed us to say very little what dissemination strategies are

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[146] Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2005.
[147] For more detailed information see:
http://www.bmsg.gv.at/cms/site/attachments/4/4/5/CH0007/CMS1119422930602/familienallianz.pdf.
[148] Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2005.
[149] Final Technical Report "Peer review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2008:64.
[150] Final Technical Report "Peer review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2006: 58.
[151] Final Technical Report "Peer review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2008:61.
[152] Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2006:58.
[153] Final Technical Report "Peer Review assessment in Social Inclusion", 2005.

used (e.g. presentations, meetings, mailing lists etc.) or possible transmission mechanisms. An empirical analysis is necessary in order to shed some light on this aspect.

Summary: In this section we presented the information gained from the secondary sources about the transferability potential. Since the data on "policy transfer" was very limited, at this stage of analysis we explored such sources as the "attendance records", results of the immediate and impact evaluations, the Member States' comments on transferability of the practices presented. The limited sources did not allow us to make any far reaching conclusions, but some aspects are worth being mentioned and should be further explored during the empirical analysis.

The literature review did not bring strong evidence that peer countries were more likely to participate in the peer reviews hosted by the countries, which belong to the same welfare regime type, and were more likely to consider transferring practices presented. In addition to the differences in welfare regime types, some representatives of the Member States' mentioned differences in terms of division of responsibility between national and regional/local institutions, budgetary constraints and strength of NGO sector, as well as political climate and other institutional obstacles as making the policy transfer less likely to occur. This makes hard to expect a mechanical influence of the peer reviews on domestic policy making given that the practices presented are not equally applicable to all domestic contexts.

There was little evidence that the peer reviews devoted to social inclusion issues were perceived as more useful in terms of mutual learning by the participants. Although most of the peer reviews dealing with pensions and healthcare issues received rather average evaluations, only very few were distinguished as outliers. The analysis showed that the peer review meetings devoted to healthcare and pensions were less likely to be perceived as having transferable practice presented. However, this can be explained by the fact that less peer reviews were organised on these issues and that most of them differed in their aim (i.e. were devoted to discuss general EU issue or policy reform and the transferability aspect was not discussed during the meeting).

The analysis of the Member States' comments indicated that although some countries considered transferring policy substance, most of them were more likely to consider a transfer at procedural level. To confirm that more transfers were actually made at procedural level than policy substance, additional empirical information on "policy transfers" should be gathered.

The EU12 countries were less likely to host a peer review than the EU15; but they did not differ much in terms of attendance. The literature analysis indicated that some of the new Member States were more likely to express their intentions to transfer a practice presented (e.g. Hungary, Poland, Cyprus, Malta, Latvia among the others) or report a transfer after the peer review (e.g. Hungary, Romania). But given the limits of the data sources used, no decisive conclusions can be drawn.

The literature provided very little information about the dissemination strategies used (e.g. presentations, meetings, mailing lists) and possible transmission mechanisms. However, it showed that the results are disseminated in the institutions or organisations, which were represented by the participants, and to a lesser extent beyond it. However, based on the literature review, it is hard to tell if the right persons are reached in the Member States and the information is not being lost in several months after the meeting. The case studies will provide more information about the dissemination channels used, as well on the position actors, who receive the outputs of the peer review.

Annexes to the Literature review

Annex 1. Learners and tutors by welfare regime (no of times participated)

In this Annex we demonstrate how many times a particular peer country attended the peer reviews, held in the host countries, which belong to the same welfare regime. It also shows how many times a particular country attended the peer reviews, held in the host countries, which belong to a different welfare regime. The number in the brackets next to the peer country indicates the number of times it attended the peer reviews.

For more details see: *Map 1. The general overview, Deliverable 1*.

		Peer countries					
		Nordic model	**Anglo-Saxon model**	**Continental model**	**Southern European**	**Eastern European**	**Croatia and Serbia**
Host countries	**Nordic model**	Denmark (2) Finland (2) Norway (4) Sweden (2)	Ireland (3) United Kingdom (4)	Austria (5) Belgium (2) France (1) Germany (4) Luxembourg (1) Netherlands (6)	Cyprus (1) Greece (4) Italy (3) Malta (2) Portugal (4) Spain (4)	Bulgaria (2) Czech Rep. (2) Estonia (4) Hungary (3) Lithuania (2) Latvia (5) Poland (4) Romania (4) Slovenia (3) Slovakia (1)	-
	Anglo-Saxon model	Denmark (3) Finland (2) Norway (2) Sweden (1)	Kingdom (2)	Austria (1) Belgium (1) France (3) Germany (1) Luxembourg (2) Netherlands (1)	Cyprus (1) Greece (1) Malta (1) Portugal (1) Spain (1)	Bulgaria (2) Czech Rep. (1) Estonia (4) Hungary (2) Lithuania (2) Latvia (2) Poland (1) Romania (2)	Serbia (1)
	Continental model	Denmark (5) Finland (9) Norway (3) Sweden (7)	Ireland (7) United Kingdom (6)	Austria (7) Belgium (4) France (7) Germany (5) Luxembourg (12) Netherlands (5)	Cyprus (7) Greece (4) Italy (6) Malta (5) Portugal (5) Spain (2)	Bulgaria (4) Czech Rep. (5) Estonia (5) Hungary (5) Lithuania (3) Latvia (5) Poland (6) Romania (5) Slovenia (8) Slovakia (3)	Serbia (1)
	Southern European	Denmark (3) Finland (3) Norway (1) Sweden (3)	Ireland (4) United Kingdom (2)	Austria (0) Belgium (0) France (4) Germany (3) Luxembourg (1) Netherlands (3)	Cyprus (4) Greece (3) Italy (2) Malta (5) Portugal (2) Spain (2)	Bulgaria (4) Czech Rep. (4) Estonia (1) Hungary (5) Lithuania (2) Latvia (3) Poland (4) Romania (4) Slovenia (2) Slovakia (1)	Serbia (2)
	Eastern European	Finland (2) Norway (2) Sweden (1)	Ireland (3) United Kingdom (3)	Austria (3) Belgium (2) France (1) Germany (2) Luxembourg (1)	Greece (1) Italy (1) Malta (1) Portugal (4) Spain (1)	Bulgaria (4) Czech Rep. (2) Estonia (3) Hungary (1) Lithuania (3) Romania (2) Slovenia (2) Slovakia (2)	Croatia (2) Serbia (1)

Annex 2. Learners and tutors by welfare regime (no of times the peer country expressed an interest to transfer the policy presented)

In this Annex we demonstrate how many times a particular peer country expressed an interest in transferring the practice presented during the peer reviews, held in the host countries, which belong to the same welfare regime. It also shows how many times a particular country expressed an interest in transferring the practice presented during the peer reviews, held in the host countries, which belong to a different welfare regime. The number in the brackets next to the peer country indicates the number of times a particular country expressed an interest in transferring the practice presented.

For more details see: *Map 9. Transferability of practices discussed during the peer review seminars, Deliverable 1.*

		Peer countries					
		Nordic model	**Anglo-Saxon model**	**Continental model**	**Southern European**	**Eastern European**	**Croatia and Serbia**
Host countries	**Nordic model**	Norway (1) Sweden (1)	-	Austria (3) France (1) Germany (2) Netherlands (3)	Greece (3) Malta (1) Portugal (2) Spain (1)	Czech Rep. (2) Estonia (1) Latvia (1) Poland (2) Romania (1) Slovenia (1) Slovakia (1)	-
	Anglo-Saxon model	Denmark (1) Norway (2)	United Kingdom (1)	France (1) Germany (1)	Malta (1) Spain (1)	Bulgaria (2) Hungary (3) Lithuania (1) Latvia (1) Romania (1)	-
	Continental model	Denmark (1)	United Kingdom (1)	Austria (1) Luxembourg (3)	Cyprus (4) Greece (1) Italy (1) Malta (3) Spain (1)	Czech Rep. (1) Estonia (2) Hungary (1) Lithuania (1) Latvia (2) Poland (1) Slovenia (1) Slovakia (1)	-
	Southern European	-	Ireland (2) United Kingdom (1)	-	Cyprus (1) Malta (1) Portugal (1)	Bulgaria (1) Hungary (2) Latvia (1) Poland (3) Romania (1) Slovakia (1)	-
	Eastern European	Finland (1)	United Kingdom (1)	-	Portugal (1) Spain (1)	Lithuania (1) Romania (1)	Croatia (1) Serbia (1)

Annex 3. Transferability of practices discussed during peer review seminars

The peer review programme should be regarded as an invitation to discover and exchange the wealth of experiences and good practices available at Member State level and to explore their applicability in other contexts. Thus, during the peer review seminar the participants discuss the lessons learned and transferability of the main components of the policy/ practice under review[154]. We analysed the comments of Member States' representatives in the minutes, synthesis reports, comments' papers and assessed whether these representatives signal clearly their intention/ readiness to use or transfer at least some elements of the practice discussed in their national policies or, on the other hand, they emphasise the institutional and other differences between the countries that make any transfer unlikely. The map indicates which countries expressed most clearly their readiness to use partially or fully the practice discussed during the peer review seminar by the key theme. Therefore the peer reviews, which covered more than one key theme, are included several times in this map.

For more information see: *Annex 3, Deliverable 1.*

Peer review	Host country	Countries that participated in the peer review (the green cells show the countries expressing the highest interest in transferring the practice discussed)									
Integration of ethnic minorities and immigrants											
Local development agreements as a tool to stop segregation in vulnerable metropolitan areas (2004)	**SE**	BE	ES	FI	IT	LT	NL	PT			
The "Reception platforms" to promote the integration of immigrants (2004)	**FR**	CY	CZ	DE	IE	PT	SE				
Field social work programmes in neighbourhoods threatened by social exclusion (2005)	**CZ**	AT	BG	ES	RO	SK	UK				
Municipal programme of shanty towns eradication in Aviles (Asturias) (2006)	**ES**	BG	CZ	EL	HU	PT	SI	SK			
Multi-regional Operational Programme to Combat Discrimination (2007)	**ES**	BG	CY	DE	EL	FI	MT	SI			
Social aspects of human trafficking (2007)	**DK**	EL	LV	NO	PL	SK					
Support Fund for the reception and integration of immigrants and their educational support	**ES**	CZ	DE	DK	EL	IT	LV	NL			
Quality and accessibility of social services											
Local development agreements as a tool to stop segregation in vulnerable metropolitan areas (2004)	**SE**	BE	ES	FI	IT	LT	NL	PT			
The Rough Sleepers Unit (England) (2004)	**UK**	DK	FI	FR	LU	NO	RO	SE			
Clearing: assistance for young people with special needs in their transition from school to working life (2004)	**AT**	EE	EL	FR	IT	LT	NO				
Experiments in social activation (1996-2001) (2004)	**NL**	BG	ES	LV	PL	SI					
Citizens' social support networks (HYVE) (2004)	**FI**	AT	BE	DE	EL	LV	MT	UK			
Preventing and tackling homelessness (2005)	**DK**	CZ	DE	EE	LU	LV	PL	NL			
Field social work programmes in neighbourhoods threatened by social exclusion (2005)	**CZ**	AT	BG	ES	RO	SK	UK				
Basic social services in rural settlements - Village and remote homestead community care-giving (2005)	**HU**	EL	FI	LT	NO	PT	SI				
National strategy to prevent and tackle homelessness (2006)	**NO**	AT	DK	EE	ES	DE	RO	SI	SE		

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[154] European Commission, "Operational Guide", p. 3. Available at: http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu/network-of-independent-experts/operational-guide_en_network.

Integrated Services in Rehabilitation - On Coordination of Organisation and Financing (2006)	**SE**	BG	EL	IE	NO	PL	NL	UK			
Access to care and health status inequalities in a context of healthcare reform (2007)	**HU**	AT	BG	CZ	EE	FI	FR	LU	PT	SI	
The future of social services of general interest (2007)	**BE**	FI	FR	IT	LT	LU	PL				
ACCESS: Cottonera Community Resource Centre (2007)	**MT**	CY	HU	IE	LT	PT	SE	UK			
Freedom of choice and dignity for the elderly (2007)	**SE**	AT	CZ	IE	NL	PT					
Cost containment in the pharmaceutical sector: Innovative approaches to contracting while ensuring fair access to drugs (2008)	**DE**	BG	FI	FR	LU	MT	NL	PL	PT	SI	
Combining choice, quality and equity in social services (2009)	**DK**	EE	ES	HU	IT	LT	NL	PT	RO	UK	
Achieving excellence in social service provision (2010)	**RO**	BE	EE	HR	LT						
Homelessness and housing exclusion											
The Rough Sleepers Unit (England) (2004)	**UK**	DK	FI	FR	LU	NO	RO	SE			
Preventing and tackling homelessness (2005)	**DK**	CZ	DE	EE	LU	LV	PL	NL			
National strategy to prevent and tackle homelessness (2006)	**NO**	AT	DK	EE	ES	DE	RO	SI	SE		
Municipal programme of shanty towns eradication in Aviles (Asturias) (2006)	**ES**	BG	CZ	EL	HU	PT	SI	SK			
National Action Plan against Substandard Housing (2007)	**FR**	BE	DK	LU	LV	MT	RO				
Counting the homeless - improving the basis for planning assistance (2009)	**AT**	DE	DK	HU	IT	LU	NO	SE	SI		
The Finnish National Programme to reduce long-term homelessness (2010)	**FI**	BG	FR	HU	LV	NO	NL	PT	SE	SI	
Building a comprehensive and participative strategy on homelessness (2010)	**PT**	DK	ES	FI	HU	IE	PL	RS			
Children and families											
Clearing: assistance for young people with special needs in their transition from school to working life (2004)	**AT**	EE	EL	FR	IT	LT	NO				
Local alliances for the family: Reconciliation of work and family life (2004)	**DE**	AT	CY	EE	HU	MT	SK				
Preventing the risks of exclusion of families with difficulties (2005)	**IT**	BG	CY	IE	MT	PL	RO				
Sure Start (2006)	**UK**	FR	HU	LT	LV	MT	PL				
ACCESS: Cottonera Community Resource Centre (2007)	**MT**	CY	HU	IE	LT	PT	SE	UK			
The City Strategy for tackling unemployment and child poverty (2009)	**UK**	AT	BG	CZ	EL	LT	LV	NO	PT	RS	
Federal Foundation Mother and Child for pregnant women in emergency situations (2010)	**DE**	BG	DK	EL	HU	IT	RS				
Promoting social inclusion of children in a disadvantaged rural environment - the micro-region of Szécsény' (2010)	**HU**	CZ	HR	IT	PT	RS	UK				
Promoting active inclusion											
Local development agreements as a tool to stop segregation in vulnerable metropolitan areas (2004)	**SE**	BE	ES	FI	IT	LT	NL	PT			
Experiments in social activation (1996-2001) (2004)	**NL**	BG	ES	LV	PL	SI					
Socio-Community Development - Mobilising all relevant bodies and promoting the participation of people suffering exclusion (2005)	**PT**	CY	DK	FR	HU	IE	IT	MT	SE		
Pathways to social Integration for people with mental health problems: the establishment of social cooperatives in Greece (2005)	**EL**	CZ	EE	FR	LV	MT	PL	RO			
Minimum income and social integration institutional arrangements (2005)	**BE**	AT	EE	ES	HU	LU	RO	SK	NL		
Integrated Services in Rehabilitation - On Coordination of Organisation and Financing (2006)	**SE**	BG	EL	IE	NO	PL	NL	UK			
Multi-regional Operational Programme to Combat Discrimination (2007)	**ES**	BG	CY	DE	EL	FI	MT	SI			
Initiatives by the social partners for improving the labour market access of disadvantaged groups (2008)	**AT**	ES	FI	IE	NO	SI	UK				

The social economy from the perspective of active inclusion (2008)	**BE**	AT	CY	CZ	EL	SE	SI	SK			
Getting women back into the labour market (2008)	**DE**	CY	DK	IT	LU	MT	NL	PL			
Measuring the impact of active inclusion and other policies to combat poverty and social exclusion (2009)	**FR**	BE	BG	IE	LT	LU	LV	MT	NL	PT	RO
The City Strategy for tackling unemployment and child poverty (2009)	**UK**	AT	BG	CZ	EL	LT	LV	NO	PT	RS	
Developing well-targeted tools for the active inclusion of vulnerable people (2009)	**NO**	AT	CY	ES	IE	PL	RO	UK			
Modernising and activating measures relating to work incapacity (2010)	**ES**	FR	LT	LU	MT	NL	PL	RO	SE	UK	
Making a success of integrating immigrants into the labour market (2010)	**NO**	AT	EL	FI	IT	LV	MT				
Using Reference Budgets for drawing up the requirements of a minimum income scheme and assessing adequacy (2010)	**BE**	AT	CY	FI	FR	IE	IT	LU	SE		
Over-indebtedness and financial exclusion											
Money advice and budgeting service (2004)	**IE**	DE	DK	HU	LU	NL	SI	UK			
Amnesty of debts: Amicable agreement and statutory solution (2006)	**NL**	DK	FR	LU	LV	SE					
Using Reference Budgets for drawing up the requirements of a minimum income scheme and assessing adequacy (2010)	**BE**	AT	CY	FI	FR	IE	IT	LU	SE		
Ageing and providing adequate and sustainable pensions											
Minimum Incomes and Women's Poverty (2006)	**BE**	CZ	DE	FI	IE	LV	PT	UK			
Freedom of choice and dignity for the elderly (2007)	**SE**	AT	CZ	IE	NL	PT					
Active ageing strategies to strengthen social inclusion (2007)	**FI**	DE	DK	EE	HU	NL	NO	RO	SI		
Public information on pension systems and pension system changes (2008)	**PL**	BG	DE	EE	HU	LT	MT	PT	SE	SK	UK
Achieving quality long-term care in residential facilities (2010)	**DE**	AT	CY	CZ	EE	ES	FI	FR	LU	SE	
A good place to grow older – national/local agreement (2011)	**UK**	CY	DK	ES	FI	HU	RO				
Health and long-term care											
Pathways to social Integration for people with mental health problems: the establishment of social cooperatives in Greece (2005)	**EL**	CZ	EE	FR	LV	MT	PL	RO			
Integrated Services in Rehabilitation - On Coordination of Organisation and Financing (2006)	**SE**	BG	EL	IE	NO	PL	NL	UK			
Access to care and health status inequalities in a context of healthcare reform (2007)	**HU**	AT	BG	CZ	EE	FI	FR	LU	PT	SI	
The future of social services of general interest (2007)	**BE**	FI	FR	IT	LT	LU	PL				
Freedom of choice and dignity for the elderly (2007)	**SE**	AT	CZ	IE	NL	PT					
Cost containment in the pharmaceutical sector: Innovative approaches to contracting while ensuring fair access to drugs (2008)	**DE**	BG	FI	FR	LU	MT	NL	PL	PT	SI	
Long-term care: How to organise affordable, sustainable long-term care given the constraints of collective versus individual arrangements and responsibilities (2009)	**NL**	AT	BE	DE	EE	HU	PL	RO	SE	SI	UK
Alzheimer's and other related diseases: coping with behavioural disorders in the patient's home	**FR**	CZ	DE	FI	LU	NL	PL	SI	UK		
Ensuring a functioning healthcare system in regions with declining and ageing populations (2009)	**DE**	EL	FI	FR	IE	PT	RO	SI	UK		
Modernising and activating measures relating to work incapacity (2010)	**ES**	FR	LT	LU	MT	NL	PL	RO	SE	UK	
Achieving quality long-term care in residential facilities (2010)	**DE**	AT	CY	CZ	EE	ES	FI	FR	LU	SE	
Interaction of social, economic and employment policies											
Social Inclusion cross cutting policy tools - "Document de politique transversale" (DPT) (2006)	**FR**	AT	BE	CY	FI	IE	LU	UK			
The social economy from the perspective of active inclusion (2008)	**BE**	AT	CY	CZ	EL	SE	SI	SK			
Getting women back into the labour market (2008)	**DE**	CY	DK	IT	LU	MT	NL	PL			
The City Strategy for tackling unemployment and child poverty (2009)	**UK**	AT	BG	CZ	EL	LT	LV	NO	PT	RS	

Making a success of integrating immigrants into the labour market (2010)	**NO**	AT	EL	FI	IT	LV	MT				
Governance											
Socio-Community Development - Mobilising all relevant bodies and promoting the participation of people suffering exclusion (2005)	**PT**	CY	DK	FR	HU	IE	IT	MT	SE		
Social Inclusion cross cutting policy tools - "Document de politique transversale" (DPT) (2006)	**FR**	AT	BE	CY	FI	IE	LU	UK			
The NAPInclusion Social Inclusion Forum (2007)	**IE**	BE	BG	ES	FR	HU	SK	UK			
Social aspects of human trafficking (2007)	**DK**	EL	LV	NO	PL	SK					
Social impact assessment (2008)	**SK**	AT	BE	BG	DE	IE	NO	RO			
Measuring the impact of active inclusion and other policies to combat poverty and social exclusion (2009)	**FR**	BE	BG	IE	LT	LU	LV	MT	NL	PT	RO
The Programme for developing local plans for social inclusion in Catalonia (2010)	**ES**	BG	CZ	LV	NL	NO	RO	RS			
The Finnish National Programme to reduce long-term homelessness (2010)	**FI**	BG	FR	HU	LV	NO	NL	PT	SE	SI	
A good place to grow older – national/local agreement (2011)	**UK**	CY	DK	ES	FI	HU	RO				