Stakeholder involvement in indicator development by public authorities using the example of the Austrian Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection

Georg REIBMAYR
Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection of Austria
Summary

- General information on the participatory process with the Ministry
- **Case Study 1:** „Austrian platform for supporting the implementation of the EUROPE 2020 headline target on combating poverty and social exclusion“
- **Case Study 2:** The EC Social Protection Committee - Indicators‘ Sub-Group > indicators‘ development at EU level
- **Case Study 3:** Indicators‘ development at national level: Survey on indicator(s) on fuel poverty in Austria
- **Case Study 4:** The global perspective: national monitoring of UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Austrian standards on public participation

- **Council of Ministers' decision from 2 July 2008:** voluntary self-commitment was recommended to be applied
- **Three levels of intensity regarding participatory processes:**
  - **Information** provided to the public on plans and decisions
  - Public **consultations:** submission of opinions
  - **Cooperation:** public shapes actively (legal review process)
Possibilities of stakeholders involvement in Austria at ministerial level

- Legal review process
- Involvement in the development of policy measures
- Institutionalized participation in Committees and bodies
- Thematic stakeholder dialogues
Participatory processes at the Austrian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs - I

- Stakeholder involvement as a general rule in our Ministry
- For certain measures specific participatory processes are being implemented, e.g. National Action Plan on Disability
- Involvement in strategy development in the context of Open Method of Coordination (OMC) on social protection (since 2000) > via „Austrian Anti-Poverty Network“ (umbrella association)
- Advisory Boards chaired by the Ministry: professional guidance of e.g. thematic European Years, research studies etc.

>> legitimacy of representation, simplification of coordination processes!!
Participatory processes at the Austrian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs - II

- Redesigning of participatory processes through the „EUROPE 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”
- Setting up of „The Austrian platform for supporting the implementation of the EUROPE 2020 headline target on combating poverty and social exclusion“
What’s the EUROPE 2020 Strategy?

- European Council decision of 17 June 2010
- **5 headline targets** combine the policy areas on employment, research and development, climate protection and energy, education, reduction of poverty and social exclusion
- 2011: establishment of **National Reform Programmes (NRP):** implementation of country-specific recommendations
- **5 headline targets** contain **8 operational targets** measuring the strategy’s implementation
The **social headline target** within the EUROPE 2020 Strategy

- **EU-wide:** Lifting at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty or social exclusion
- At national level **national target values** are defined contributing to the common attainment of the strategy’s agenda.

- **In Austria:** Lifting at least 235,000 persons out of the risk of poverty or social exclusion (as of today: 157,000)
Goal of the EUROPE 2020 Strategy governance: public involvement

- Decision of the Strategy contains also commitment to its cooperative implementation *with the participation of regional and local administration, social partners and civil society*
- From the strategy, national reform programs are derived in 2011 with public participation in the "policy cycle" as early as possible
- In Austria: overall coordination by the Federal Chancellory
Case Study 1:

„The Austrian platform for supporting the implementation of the EUROPE 2020 headline target on combating poverty and social exclusion“
What are the characteristics of the Austrian Platform?

- Established in 2011/12 by the Ministry...
- ...in order to back the implementation of the EUROPE 2020 social headline target in Austria
- More formalised contact with stakeholders than before
- Establishment of a permanent dialogue with all relevant stakeholders in Austria
- Information and consultation mechanism with high degree of participation
- Regular platform meetings at least every 6 months
What are the objectives of the Austrian Platform?

- Networking and information exchange
- **Mutual information channel** for current developments at national/international political level and at stakeholders’ spheres of activities
- Discussion of policy initiatives and guiding suggestions of the Ministry
- Presentation of recent reports and statistics from the Ministry (national Social Report etc.)
- Close exchange with National Statistics Office: *Statistics Austria* presents latest surveys, indicators etc. > direct feedback from civil society
- Consultation process on EUROPE 2020 social headline target: accompanying statements by civil society
Who are the members of the Austrian Platform?

- **Line Ministries**: Labour/Social Affairs, Health, Education, Finance, Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Federal Chancellory
- **Statistics Austria**
- **9 provincial governments**
- **Social partners**: Trade Union Federation, Chamber of Labour, Economic Federation of Industries
- **Social security funds**
- **Decisive social NGOs in Austria**: „Volkshilfe“, Caritas etc.
- **Advocacy of certain target groups**, e.g. elderly, people with disabilities, youth, women, Roma
The practical work of the Austrian Platform: Indicators measuring poverty and social exclusion

- In addition to the social indicators defined at EU level, further indicators have been defined in Austria, the so-called “National inclusion indicators”
- National indicators for a more comprehensive picture of Austrian specifics
- Revision process of these indicators in 2012 together with the Austrian Platform due to new basic conditions regarding data
- Consultation process: exchange of views with the group, discussion paper, written comments by the stakeholders > revision of the national indicators‘ set!
Case Study 2:

The Indicators' Sub-Group (ISG) of the Social Protection Committee (SPC) to the European Commission
What’s the Indicators’ Sub-Group (ISG) doing?

- ISG was set up in 2001
- developing and defining EU social indicators in order to monitor member countries' progress towards the commonly agreed objectives underpinning the Open Method of Coordination
- carrying out analytical work based on agreed indicators and develop analytical frameworks to support policy reviews
- contributing to the improvement of social statistics at EU level, particularly through development of EU-SILC
Who are the ISG’s members?

- **Governments of 28 EU Member States**: national experts in the fields of social inclusion, pensions, health and long term care
- supported by the Commission’s policy analysts (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) and statisticians (Eurostat)
- academic expertise through studies and specific contributions

- **Stakeholder involvement on the national level (Austria)**: consultation with relevant Units and other Line Ministries, Statistics Austria, academic sector
Examples of the Indicators’ Sub-Group (ISG) work

- Contributing actively to delivering on the 2016 SPC priorities, including on EUORPE 2020 and the European Semester
- Development of a monitoring Scoreboard to the European Pillar of Social Rights
- Preparation of the SPC Annual Report on the social situation in the EU
- Social Protection Performance Monitor (SPPM)
- Thematic work: measurement of material deprivation, child poverty and well-being, housing exclusion and homelessness, pensions, health, long-term care
Case Study 3:

Development of an indicator on fuel poverty in Austria
Background and objectives of the project

- dissatisfaction with the currently prevailing definitions of fuel poverty > request for a more detailed definition
- **Procurement** of a research contract with a research institute (September 2017 – May 2018)
- survey among practitioners from the energy and social economy (**multi-dimensional approach**)
Stakeholder involvement: Advisory Board

- **Who?** – Senior experts from academia, counselling services for people affected by poverty, energy industry, Ministry
- **When?** – Several sessions during the entire project cycle
- **How?** – Discussion and feeding into the several steps of the survey
- **Advantages?**
  - useful reflexions and feedback from different perspectives – for the contractor *and* for the Ministry!
  - Strengthening the commitment in the "scene" and acceptance of the results
  - **Broader definition(s)/indicator(s)** > more enlightening conclusions that can be incorporated into the policy development process
Case Study 4:

UN Sustainable Development Goals – Implementation of the Agenda 2030 in Austria
Consolidation process

- Led by the Federal Chancellory
- Establishment of an inter-departmental working group on the “Implementation of the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development”
- Discussion and presentation of the Line Ministries’ contributions to the implementation of the Agenda 2030 in Austria
- **Ongoing work:** elaboration of an indicators set to monitor the SDGs implementation by Statistics Austria
- Break down of UN indicators proposals to the national level under the inclusion of all relevant Line Ministries
Outlook: future of participatory processes

- A variety of participatory practices were established and institutionalized in Austria.
- Awareness of these processes and their role in the EUROPE 2020 Strategy not yet been fully anchored in both administration and civil society - neither at EU level, where the Austrian participatory practices are hardly perceived.
- Possible reasons: Too much fragmentation of the public documentation of these processes (low standardization and formalization)

> Potential for optimization:

*Intensification of the information transfer about the strategy*
Contact data:

GEORG REIBMAYR
General Social Policy Issues and Research, Department V/B/4
Stubenring 1, A-1010 Wien
Tel: +43 (1) 711 00-862542
Fax: 43 (1) 71 89 47 02 340
georg.reibmayr@sozialministerium.at
sozialministerium.at
facebook.com/sozialministerium