

# Foreword

Social protection systems aim to protect individuals against concrete social risks, such as periods of unemployment or health problems. They provide a range of public services, from healthcare to childcare, as well as labour market and social inclusion programmes. However, people experiencing social exclusion are not a homogeneous group. They also often face multiple difficulties at once, making social and labour market integration a challenge. When applied in isolation and without co-ordination with other policies, individual policies are less effective than integrated services or packages combining cash benefits and social integration pathways. Social and labour market inclusion pathways often emphasise the need to go beyond single support measures provided in isolation.

Social inclusion in Spain is facing many challenges in addressing the multiple needs of those at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Social inclusion programmes tend to lack both human and financial resources to develop individualised pathways and focus on prevention. As social inclusion remains part of regional responsibility in Spain, there are also inequalities in access to good-quality services that meet the needs of support seekers. Co-ordination challenges between different actors do not facilitate the provision of a continued range of support measures.

This report examines the specific barriers or markers individuals at risk of social exclusion face in Spain. It also analyses the current service provision framework and signals shortcomings in Spain's current approach to – and the current benefits of – social inclusion.

The report discusses recommendations for the central government, as such, and for its co-ordinated action with regions. In particular, the report discusses recommendations to strengthen the take-up of the national minimum income programme for eligible households.

Reflecting the decentralised nature of social inclusion provisions in Spain, policy options are suggested for a more coherent approach to inclusion in needs assessments and service co-ordination. This will require a consensus among key stakeholders, such as regional authorities and public employment services.



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