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World Social Security Forum in Brussels: "Protecting people in a changing world"

Brussels, 14 October 2019

The World Social Security Forum takes place in Brussels from 14 to 18 October 2019. The event welcomes 1,300 experts from more than 150 countries to share their innovative visions in confronting the main global challenges for social security. Leading Belgian experts will also shed light on new strategies aimed at strengthening social protection in our country.

The Forum

The World Social Security Forum (WSSF) is the largest global event focused on social security. Over 1,300 participants - including leading representatives of governments and international organizations, administrators, CEOs and senior managers from around the world - will discuss the latest and most effective strategies for enhancing social protection. This is happening in a period of fast-paced technological, demographic and economic change. The ISSA organizes the event every three years, in different continents. This year the event is hosted by the Belgian Public Social Security Institutions.

Global challenges

At this global summit, three years after publication of the ISSA report on the ten global challenges for social security, experts and policy makers take stock of progress made over the past three years. There will also be a sharing of good practice, and specialists will focus on how social security can offer solutions to the challenges of tomorrow:

- Challenge 1: closing the coverage gap
- Challenge 2: inequalities across the life course
- Challenge 3: population ageing
- Challenge 4: employment of young workers
- Challenge 5: labour markets and the digital economy
- Challenge 6: health and long-term care
- Challenge 7: new risks, shocks and extreme events
- Challenge 8: protection of migrant workers
- Challenge 9: the technological transition
- Challenge 10: higher public expectations

Belgium sets the tone

The Belgian social security system is considered one of the most progressive in Europe. Several of our country's experts will share their knowledge and experience on how to deal with the most pressing social security challenges. Professor Bea Cantillon (University of Antwerp) will shed light on how to address social inequality, and François Pichault (University of Liège) will take a closer look at the rise of new forms of work and the impact they have on social security. Jo De Cock (INAMI) will focus on the theme of health and aging, and Pierre Vandervorst (Smals) on digitization and technological changes.

75 years of social security in Belgium

2019 sees us celebrate the 75th anniversary of the signing of the decree-law on which our current social security system is based. A wide range of social protection measures arise from this law (family benefits, reimbursements and allowances for health care, incapacity to work, unemployment and retirement). Generation after generation, our social security system has evolved from a simple system to insure against social risks into a device that ensures security for all.

Belgium: one of the most egalitarian countries in the world

Unlike many other countries, our system combines income-related insurance with the fight against poverty. This has not been fruitless: globally, with a Gini index of 0.268, Belgium is one of the most egalitarian countries in the world. Representational management, our tradition of social consultation, a proactive approach and a high degree of automation are also key factors in the Belgian model, enabling us to make a difference to the every day life of our citizens.

Practical information

The WSSF takes place from 14 to 18 October inclusive, at the Square Conference Center in Brussels. The World Summit and 33rd General Assembly of the ISSA are organized by the ISSA and Public Social Security Institutions. The WSSF combines plenary sessions with interactive presentations and workshops.

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