

# **SOCIAL PROTECTION IN CYPRUS: OVERVIEW AND CHALLENGES**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of the characteristics, recent reforms, shortcomings and policy challenges of the social protection system in Cyprus as it emerges in the aftermath of the crisis. As, Cyprus continues to recover, with its GDP being projected to grow by 3.1% in 2017 (Economics Research Centre), important challenges still exist in terms of high levels of unemployment, inequality, poverty and social exclusion; all unfortunate by-products of the recession. Upcoming demographic changes are also expected to exert pressure on the economic efficiency of the system. Therefore, mapping social policies in Cyprus is crucial at this point of time. In this spirit, the paper focuses on the following social policy fields: provision of income support to families, minimum income support, employment-related policies, pensions, health care, long-term care, while other policy areas (early education and child care, education and provisions to asylum seekers) are also briefly addressed. The most important policy reforms that were implemented from 2009 and onward are presented and briefly assessed, while a section is devoted in discussing potential policies which might be needed in the near future.

Keywords: Social protection, Cyprus

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