

Europe 2020: Towards a more social EU?

Research questions

What were the main strengths and weaknesses of the Lisbon Strategy?

What is the social policy coordination process of the new Europe 2020 Strategy?

What is the impact of the recent economic and budgetary crisis on EU integration in the social area?

How can policymakers fully activate the complex EU toolkit (OMC, Structural Funds, legislation, social dialogue) on social policy ?

Constructing a common research framework

How can Europe 2020, the EU's new strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, lead to a stronger social EU with less poverty and greater social cohesion?

This project focuses on the weaknesses and strengths of the European socio-economic governance within the Europe 2020 Strategy. It is part of the broader scientific preparation of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU in the second part of 2010.

In June 2010, EU leaders adopted a target to lift at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and exclusion by 2020; this presents an important step forward. However, delivering on this and the Union's four other mutually reinforcing targets, as well as achieving the EU's ambitious social objectives, raises many political and technical challenges.

A key objective of the project is to contribute to an edited book on the new Strategy. The latter aims to take a critical look at, and draw lessons from the past (2000-2010 Lisbon Strategy) Another important objective is to explore the format and role of EU coordination and cooperation in the social field, in a context marked by slow recovery following the global economic crisis. Finally, the book makes proposals for the improvement of the different instruments available at EU, national and sub-national levels.

Main research findings

Assessing the Lisbon Strategy and Social OMCs

- The Lisbon Strategy (2000-10) demonstrated that a 'trickle down' ideology is unsustainable
- In the last decade, levels of poverty, inequality and social exclusion in EU countries have remained stubbornly high
- The Lisbon Strategy played an important role in raising the salience of social policy in the EU and its Member States
- However, it did not succeed in addressing tensions between economic integration and social policy coordination

New Opportunities and Risks under the Lisbon Treaty and Europe 2020

- The Lisbon Treaty (e.g. the horizontal social clause) provides an opportunity to move towards a stronger Social EU
- The financial, economic and budgetary crisis has reinforced the need to address the tensions between economic, employment and social objectives
- A major risk is the growing prominence of economic aims that put social coordination at the margin (in a context of budgetary austerity)
- The role of the Social OMC within Europe 2020 needs to be made operational

Publication output

Europe 2020: Towards a more social EU ?

Edited by **Eric Marlier** and **David Natali**, with **Rudi Van Dam**
PIE-Peter Lang, 2010 (Work and Society series)

"Foreword" by Laurette Onkelinx, Belgian Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Social Affairs and Public Health, in charge of Social Integration

"Europe 2020: Towards a more social EU?" by Hugh Frazer and Eric Marlier, with David Natali, Rudi Van Dam and Bart Vanhercke

"Mapping the Components of Social EU: A critical Analysis of the Current Institutional Patchwork" by Maurizio Ferrera

"Aftershock: The Coming Social Crisis in the EU and What is to Be Done" by Roger Liddle and Patrick Diamond, with Simon Latham and Tom Brodie

"The Lisbon Strategy, Europe 2020 and the crisis in Between" by David Natali

"Delivering the Goods for Europe 2020? The Social OMC's Adequacy and Impact Re-assessed" by Bart Vanhercke

"Assessing the EU Approach to Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Last Decade" by Mary Daly

"A Territorialised Social Agenda to Guide Europe 2020 and the Future EU Cohesion Policy" by Marjorie Jouen

"Social Impact Assessment as a Tool for Mainstreaming Social Protection and Inclusion Concerns in Public Policy" by Martin Kühnemund

"The Potential of Eurotargets: Reflecting on French Experience" by Robert Walker

"Strengthening Social Inclusion in the Europe 2020 Strategy by Learning from the Past" by Hugh Frazer and Eric Marlier

"Towards a Stronger OMC in a More Social Europe 2020: A New Governance Architecture for EU Policy Coordination" by Jonathan Zeitlin



Research team

Europe 2020: Towards a more social EU?

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WP01
Tensions between
Flexibility and Security

RECOWE

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