Social developments in the European Union 2013

Edited by David Natali

Brief summary

As the EU struggles to recover from the shocks of the recent financial crisis, this book provides a forum for discussion about the crucial importance of EU social policy. While acknowledging the intense feelings of euroscepticism that have spread throughout the continent, the authors argue that for the EU to cohere as a monetary union, it must address key aspects of a social union as well.

- Anton Hemerijck examines the facets of the European social construction.
- Christophe Degryse, Maria Jepsen and Philippe Pochet discuss different models of economic and political union.
- Frank Vandenbroucke, Bart Vanhercke and John Morley present ten key questions that should be considered in the development of a social union.
- Ferdinand Fichtner discusses the pros and cons of a Euro-area-wide unemployment insurance.
- Ramón Peña-Casas and Denis Bouget consider an EU minimum income.
- Dalila Ghailani asserts that gender equality in the EU is still incomplete.
- Carole Lang, Stefan Clauwaert and Isabelle Schömann argue that crisis reforms have destabilized flexicurity so that it favours flexibility over security.
- David Natali introduces and concludes the volume with analyses of the current state of the social union and of the EU's future prospects.

Thus far, European policymakers have followed a typical ‘muddling through’ strategy, where they implement incremental or even major reforms based on the minimum reachable consensus between Member States. This approach has helped the EU to survive but has not established a coherent and effective strategy to jumpstart long-term European growth and stability. Social developments in the European Union 2013 opens the door for this fundamental debate. With a truly critical outlook but still with some hope for the future, the authors pave the way for a discussion of Social Europe.