Social developments in the European Union: state of play 2017

CONCLUSIONS

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Today we presented and discussed

• Questions (relevant)
• Analysis (state of the art)
• Proposals (constructive)
The future of the European Union

Further integration

**Differentiated integration:** multi-speed Europe

- pragmatic perspective

Disintegration

- the domino has not fallen – yet
The future of the European Union

A shared endeavor

EU institutions: time to be ambitious
• high hopes/high yields

MS: avoid ‘blame shifting’ and ‘credit claiming’ attitudes

Research community: sound analysis and constructively-critical proposals

Social partners and civil society: key role to play

European citizens: what alternatives to the EU?

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The future of ‘Social Europe’: hope

The **European Pillar of Social Rights** can be said to be a landmark

Political legitimacy (social agenda), but what is the Pillar for?

- **Relaunching EU action in the social domain**: Pillar Package but a roadmap absolutely needed…
- **Influencing MS’ policies**: European Semester and other policy tools
- **Influencing the contents of EU macro-economic and fiscal policies**: a ‘social imbalances procedure’?
A more balanced Semester

The European Pillar of Social Rights at its heart

Beyond the mantra of fiscal consolidation

A shift towards social investment

Transparency, openness and ownership

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Looking forward: moving to high hopes and high yields

A renewed commitment to inclusive growth and to fighting poverty and social exclusion

• Embedding EU ambitions into the UN Sustainable development goals
  • to reduce poverty by half between 2015 and 2030

• A renewed commitment from the MS

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Looking forward: moving to high hopes and high yields

Further improving the EU’s socio-economic governance

Less stringent interpretation of budgetary rules

Relaunching ‘social investment’ (e.g. by excluding expenditure for education from public deficit calculation)

Involving national stakeholders in the elaboration of NRPs and in the implementation of the CSRs

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Looking forward: moving to high hopes and high yields

Promoting a ‘European Social Union’ (“a Union of MS, with their own welfare systems but supported and oriented by the EU” (Vandenbroucke et al., 2014)

- Common unemployment benefit schemes and a Framework Directive on minimum income.
- A Skills Guarantee (European Parliament)
- A European Child Guarantee (a EU basic income for children)

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Looking forward: moving to high hopes and high yields

Making ‘social protection for all’ a reality

First, understanding the nature of the challenge:

- **Drawing lessons** from MS’ good practices
- **Organising in-depth knowledge** of the way social protection of non-standard workers and the self-employed is financed in the MS
- **Addressing data and knowledge gaps**
- **Tackling burning definitional issues**

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The time to act is now

Eurobarometer survey 2017

- 56% of Europeans are optimistic about the future of the EU
- 42% of Europeans trust the EU
- 40% of Europeans have a positive image of the EU
- 68% of Europeans feel they are ‘citizens of the EU’

A European demos waiting for answers

It is now time to move from high hopes to high yields!

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(It is also time for a drink and a thank you)
Thank you for your attention

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