Towards a European Social Union: how to piece it together

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General argument

1. The great recession has caused a «social shock» which has not been re-absorbed

2. An increasing number of voters blame the EU and its «austerity» euro-sceptic parties and souverainisme

1. Historical experience: social solidarity is the «glue» that keeps a polity together

2. Is it possible to increase the glue within the EU polity?

3. Enormous challenge. Grand and brave ambitions, institutional pragmatism

4. Most promising strategy: European Social Union
Basic assumptions:

- ESU should not be a fully fledged «federal/united welfare state»

- But a *Union of national welfare states*...

- ...Co-existing together, but not as one

- Co-existence based on the fundamental social values laid down in the Lisbon Treaty
Foundations: A UNION BASED ON SOCIAL VALUES

• “The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.” (art 1)

• [The Union] shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child (art 3)

• It shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States (art.3)
European Social Model
Caring Europe
Social Investment
Social Europe
Active inclusion
Europe qui protege
Social Dimension

Lisbon Treaty
EIOPR Court
Regional social schemes
Social acquis
Posted workers directive

ESF
Fundamental rights
Social security coordination

ERDF
Local social initiatives
Court of Justice EU

Social scoreboard

National social protection systems
European Pillar of Social Rights
NOMINA SUNT OMINA

European Social Model
Caring Europe

Social Europe
Social Dimension

EUROPEAN SOCIAL UNION

Lisbon Treaty
National social protection systems

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Social Investment

Local social initiatives
EU
Court of Justice

ESF
Fundamental rights
Social security coordination

ERDF
Social dialogue

EIROP
Court

Active inclusion
Youth guarantee

Regional social schemes
Social acquis

FEAD
Posted workers directive

Common agricultural policy
European Pillar of Social Rights

European Pillar of Social Rights

EuVVisions

REScEU
1) National social spaces, with “family resemblances”

- Common tradition relying on social market economy and social dialogue
- National traditions and legitimate diversities
2) Transnational social spaces

- Cross-border regional cooperation
- Transnational occupational pension schemes (EIORP)
3) Single Mobility space

- Free movement of workers, pensioners, patients, students and service providers
- Social security coordination and posting of workers
4) European social policy

ESP
Regulatory legislation + coordination

EU budget/funds
5) European fundamental social principles

- Social provisions of the Lisbon Treaty
- Rules on decision making responsibilities and procedures
EU Citizenship

- Free movement and access to benefits (live and move within the EU)
- Access to employment and social protection
- Vote and stand as candidate in local and EU elections
- Petition EP
- Consular protections
- *Access to co-funded social institutions (i.e. Youth guarantee, Globalisation adjustment fund, Fund for European aid to deprived persons, ESF)*
European Pillar of Social Rights

- Rights and principles regarding:
  - Equal opportunity and access to the labour market
  - Fair working conditions
  - Social protection and inclusion
  - Operational arm of fundamental principles
ESU and solidarity: *general objectives*

- Upholding *domestic* forms of (sustainable) solidarity
- Mainstreaming social objectives into EMU
- Promoting forms of *pan-European* solidarity ("federal" element)
ESU and solidarity: priorities

- Comprehensive and recognizable governance system
- Pooling of some risks which depend on the very existence of EMU (e.g. asymmetric shocks → automatic stabilizers)

UEM USE
Support for pan-European solidarity: the elite-mass gap

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mass</th>
<th>Elite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>67,9</td>
<td>60,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>64,9</td>
<td>42,2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>91,2</td>
<td>86,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>82,0</td>
<td>50,4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>91,0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>69,5</td>
<td>78,3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aggregate</td>
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<td>59,5</td>
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</table>

Financial help to states that face a rise in unemployment

- Mass: 67.9% in favour, 32.1% not in favour
- Elite: 60.4% in favour, 39.6% not in favour
- Mass: 64.9% in favour, 42.2% not in favour
- Elite: 42.2% in favour, 57.8% not in favour
- Mass: 91.2% in favour, 8.8% not in favour
- Elite: 86.7% in favour, 13.3% not in favour
- Mass: 82.0% in favour, 18.1% not in favour
- Elite: 50.4% in favour, 49.6% not in favour
- Mass: 91.0% in favour, 9.0% not in favour
- Elite: 93.3% in favour, 6.7% not in favour

- Mass: 69.5% in favour, 30.5% not in favour
- Elite: 78.3% in favour, 21.7% not in favour
- Mass: 77.7% in favour, 22.3% not in favour
- Elite: 59.5% in favour, 40.5% not in favour
Support for pan-European solidarity: the elite-mass gap

Financial help to states that face a rise in unemployment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party/Group</th>
<th>Not in favour</th>
<th>In favour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Left &amp; Greens</td>
<td>11,5</td>
<td>88,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S&amp;D</td>
<td>17,4</td>
<td>82,6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liberals</td>
<td>48,9</td>
<td>51,1</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPP</td>
<td>23,8</td>
<td>76,2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radical right</td>
<td>28,9</td>
<td>71,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>En Marche</td>
<td>28,9</td>
<td>71,1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: Not in favour, In favour

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Source: EuVVisions
ESU: politically feasible?

Demand side
• More (potential) support than meets the eye: silent majority

Supply side
• Insufficient interest/capacity on the side of mainstream leaders to connect with the silent majority and to embrace the «glue» logic for keeping the EU (euro-) polity together
• Eurosceptic «agitation»
2019: the turning point?

• March 2019: real Brexit

• May/June: EP elections

• Tipping point: positive (re-booting) or negative (break-up)

• «Big Crossing» capable of addressing the novel social question with the help of the EU, just as the old social question was successfully addressed at the national level at the start of the 20° century.
Thank you!

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Social

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