Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2018

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Conclusions and recommendations

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#SPEU18
Structure of the presentation

1. The European Pillar of Social Rights as a game changer?

2. Policy Recommendations

3. Why do we need a strong social Europe (asap)?
The European Pillar of Social Rights as a game changer? (1)

Why this time it could be different? The EPSR, the SIP and the ‘politicisation’ of EU social policies.

The political nature of the Pillar:

- **Context**: the debate on the Future of Europe;
- **Origins**: the role of the President of the Commission;
- **Development**: building a supporting coalition through the consultation;
- **High-level endorsement**: role of the Parliament and Inter-Institutional Proclamation
- **Symbolic aspect**: rights-based language
The European Pillar of Social Rights as a game changer? (2)

How we can understand the EPSR?

A EU social policy framework: a policy infrastructure combining the various elements of public policy, from agenda setting to implementation.

Three functions:

1) Revitalising the EU social policy arena and revamping the EU social policy agenda;

2) Influencing Member States’ (social) policies through the European Semester;

3) Influencing the EU’s macro-economic and fiscal policies
The European Pillar of Social Rights as a game changer? (3)

Revitalising the EU social policy arena and revamping the EU social policy agenda

Pillar Package

Social Fairness Package
The European Pillar of Social Rights as a game changer? (4)

Influencing Member States’ (social) policies through the European Semester;

The European Semester 2018:

AGS 2018

Follows structure of EPSR, but not all the principles taken into consideration

Draft Joint Employment Report 2018

Revised Employment Guidelines inspired by EPSR Principles
Headline indicators of the Social Scoreboard used

Country reports
The EPSR informs the analysis
The European Pillar of Social Rights as a game changer? (5)

The CSRs 2018 (from Vesan, Corti and Sabato, 2018)

Share of ‘social CSRs’ over total CSRs
The European Pillar of Social Rights as a game changer? (6)

Social CSRs by ‘policy orientation’

Three orientations of social CSRs
The European Pillar of Social Rights as a game changer? (7)

Two conclusions

- Since 2014 the European Semester is more social
- Evolution 2017 – 2018: Pillar effect

But

‘the Pillar should be implemented according to available resources and within the limits of sound budgetary management and Treaty obligations governing public finances’ (European Commission, 2017)

- ‘constrained socialisation’ of the Semester?
The European Pillar of Social Rights as a game changer? (8)

Influencing EU macro-economic and fiscal policies

The limitations of the Social Scoreboard

- Not all the principles of the Pillar are covered
- Need to boost headline and secondary indicators
- ‘Weight’ compared to dominant scoreboards
  - Macro-economic Imbalances Procedure
  - Excessive Deficit Procedure
The European Pillar of Social Rights as a game changer? (9)

Would the ‘reconciliation’ of EU social and economic policies/objectives be sufficient?

The eco-social-growth trilemma
Policy Recommendations (1)

1. Taking the Sustainable Development Agenda seriously.

2. Striking a new balance between EU economic and social policies by strengthening the social dimension of E(M)U.


4. A roadmap for the implementation of the EPSR.
Policy Recommendations (2)

Examples:

• A (social) budget for the eurozone

• A common European unemployment scheme

• A Social Progress Protocol (ETUC)

• A Social Imbalances Procedure
Why do we need a strong social Europe (asap)? (1)

Are these proposals realistic/feasible?

Euroskeptic/sovranist parties, some of them with limited democratic credentials: defending people’s (social) rights against a Europe who only protects the interests of the capital and of banks:

**Poland:** PiS

**Hungary:** Fidesz; Jobbik

**Italy:** Northern League

**Germany:** AfD

**France:** FN

Et al.
Why do we need a strong social Europe (asap)? (2)

A strong social Europe supporting Member States’ welfare systems is not only a matter of social fairness.

It’s a matter of protecting our democracies!
Thank you for your attention!