

OSE Newsletter 4 – March 2010

/// FOREWORD

The next few months will be decisive for the future of the EU and its social dimension. Even if the European Union's agreement to provide Greece with a financial safety net has averted an imminent crisis, EU policymakers face formidable challenges in the relaunch of the European project. While the Heads of State and Government have accepted the need for sweeping new powers of economic governance, it remains to be seen how this can and will be implemented, and what the social consequences of such a move (which will entail renewed focus on fiscal discipline) will be. Especially in view of the fact that the effects of the economic crisis have only just started to kick in 'on the ground'.

At the same time, Member States are preparing the transition from the Lisbon Strategy (which is coming to an end this year) to the new "Europe 2020" Strategy. Here too, the future of the social dimension is far from guaranteed, even though the agreement by last week's Spring European Council to make the reduction of poverty one of the 5 key objectives and targets for the EU's new strategy gives something to build on. This issue of the Newsletter highlights the OSE's contribution to the debate - at national and EU level - around the Europe 2020 Strategy. Readers will also discover that the OSE team, including the new joint directors, is fully engaged in the preparation of the forthcoming Belgian Presidency of the EU (second half of 2010). We hope you will check out our website, which is now available in French and English. Happy reading.

David Natali and Bart Vanhercke, co-directors

Publications Update

Health System Governance in Europe. The Role of EU Law and Policy

Elias Mossialos, Govin Permanand, Rita Baeten and Tamara Hervey (eds.),
Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010

This brand new book, a joint publication by the OSE and the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, was funded by the Belgian federal health authorities (SPF Santé Publique) and the National Institute for Health and Disability Insurance (NIHDI/INAMI). It contains an up-to-the-minute academic discussion on a number of current and emerging governance issues in EU healthcare policy, including regulatory, legal, "new governance" and policy-making dynamics. OSE team members Rita Baeten (who is also one of the co-editors), Bart Vanhercke and [Irene Glinos](#) co-authored five chapters of this volume (more details on these chapters can be found in the [Selected Readings](#) section of the OSE website).

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After the Euro and Enlargement: Social Pacts in the EU

Philippe Pochet, Maarten Keune and David Natali, ETUI and OSE, Brussels, 2010

This book aims to shed light on the most recent wave (last decade) of social pacts in western and eastern EU countries. In the context of recent socio-economic and political challenges (globalisation, changing economic context, labour market transformation, and the full implementation of EMU), 11 country chapters summarise the recent evolution of social pacts across the Eurozone and in New EU Member States. These country chapters demonstrate that such agreements are changing institutions that can be used by policymakers and social partners in their efforts to deal effectively with evolving socio-economic and political challenges. The book is dedicated to the memory of Prof. Franz Traxler.

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La Strategia di Lisbona come fattore di modernizzazione del Modello social europeo: valutazioni

David Natali, Rivista delle politiche sociali (Italian Journal of Social Policy), Special Issue "Strategia di Lisbona, 2010. Un compromesso divenuto imperfetto", no. 4/09

This article summarises some key findings about the Lisbon Strategy and its influence on the European social model. On the basis of the existing literature and key indicators proposed by the Strategy, the article examines the (limited) success and the limitations of the Lisbon Strategy. It then summarises both positive and negative aspects of the implementation of the Strategy, and highlights substantive and procedural tensions that still need to be resolved. This article is part of a special issue with contributions from leading scholars such as Jonathan Zeitlin, Jean-Claude Barbier, Caroline de la Porte and Ralf Rogowski.

[More info...](#)

Public/private mix in pensions in Europe. The role of state, market and social partners in supplementary pensions

David Natali, ETUI Working Paper Series, no.10, 2009

This paper is the first product of the research project "The Governance of Supplementary Pensions Schemes" carried out by the OSE and financed by the European Trade Union Institute. It sheds light on the multi-dimensional and changing interplay between state, market institutions and social partners in relation to supplementary pension schemes, the importance of which is growing across Europe. The paper offers a lucid analysis of the responsibility shared among these three sets of actors to protect against the risk of old age by developing the provision of privately managed fully-funded schemes.

[More info...](#) (ETUI website)

The EU and supplementary pensions. Instruments for integration and the market for occupational pensions in Europe

Igor Guardiancich and David Natali, ETUI Working Paper Series, no.11, 2009

This paper is the first product of the research project "EU social policies - monitoring and analysis: Private Pensions" carried out by the OSE and financed by the European Trade Union Institute. It shows that reliance on private retirement pensions is on the increase both at Member State level, via the spread of quasi-mandatory occupational plans, and at EU level, as a result of initiatives including the [Directive](#) on the activities and supervision of institutions for occupational retirement provision. This Working Paper analyses the legislative and market trends that underpin this development, assessing the impact of the global financial crisis, presenting the regulatory improvements required, and delineating the future prospects of the market for supplementary pensions.

[More info...](#) (ETUI website)

RECWOWE Network Newsletter

This Special Issue opens with an interview with the coordinators of the work packages and the coordinators of RECOWWE, providing an overview of research activities within the network. Last December, RECOWWE co-organised a conference on “The New Welfare State in Europe”, held at the European University Institute in Florence (see OSE Newsletter 3). Anna Safuta, the Newsletter editor, took this opportunity to discuss the future of European welfare states and the Europe2020 strategy in the making with some of the participating scholars. The results of these interviews can be found in this Special Issue. The last phase of the network’s existence will comprise a broad range of dissemination activities, with many workshops, national meetings and dialogue meetings, as well as the fourth annual RECOWWE Integration Week taking place in Nantes in June 2010. As usual, you will find all the details about these events in the “Conferences/Workshops” section of the Newsletter.

[More info...](#) (RECOWWE website)

Brèves sur les soins de santé en Europe / Nieuws over gezondheidszorg uit Europa

No.13, March 2010

This Newsletter, published in French and in Dutch, provides an overview of EU-level developments of relevance to national healthcare systems, with links to a variety of official documents. It includes policy developments and European Court of Justice case law. Subscription is free.

[French version](#) [Dutch version](#)

News

Research

In the run-up to the new reporting cycle of the Social Protection and Social Inclusion OMC, Bart Vanhercke and David Natali are participating in a wide-scale assessment of the effectiveness and impact of this EU process. The assessment, at the request of the European Commission and funded through the PROGRESS Community programme, is being carried out by a consortium led by the Public Policy and Management Institute (PPMI, Lithuania). Its goals are twofold: to develop a “reference methodology” for evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the Social OMC, and to apply this methodology to the Social OMC in a variety of Member States. The first stage of the research (literature review) is being carried out in close cooperation with Caroline de la Porte (University of Southern Denmark and Research Associate at the OSE).

Forthcoming events

26 April 2010 “OSE Luchtime Session”

EU “Social Affairs” after the Lisbon Treaty: an Inside View from the Spanish Presidency. With Carlos García de Cortazar, Coordinating Social Affairs Attaché of the Spanish Permanent Representation to the EU. The OSE Luchtime Sessions (Midis de l’OSE) bring together the OSE team and their guests.

[More info...](#) [EN](#) | [FR](#)

4-5 May 2010 Conference: “Labour Markets after the Crisis”, Madrid

Organised by the RECOWWE Network of Excellence, the European Social Observatory and the Trade Union-related Research Institutes (TURI) network. More

information available soon on the [RECWOWE](#) and [OSE](#) websites.

19 May 2010 Conference-debate: “Social Developments in the European Union 2009”

To mark the publication of this book, which explores the social policy issues that featured on the European agenda during the past year, the OSE and ETUI will be holding a conference-debate at the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC).

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Past events

24 March 2010 EU 2010 Year for combating poverty and social exclusion

In the context of the EU 2010 Year for combating poverty and social exclusion, the Liaison Agency Flanders-Europe (Vlaams Europees Verbindingsagentschap, VLEVA) organised on 24 March 2010 a “thematic platform” on European policies in the area of social inclusion. Bart Vanhercke gave a presentation about the usages and impact of EU initiatives in this area, and the impediments as well as opportunities for regional stakeholders to use the EU as leverage.

[More info...](#) [EN](#) | [NL](#)

The OSE in European Networks

CAPRIGHT – Resources, Rights and Capabilities: in search of social foundation for Europe

The OSE is involved in the CAPRIGHT European research network, which is funded by the European Commission under the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) and aims at promoting individual and collective capabilities, studying the relations between labour markets, employment and welfare regimes. The objective of CAPRIGHT is to build an innovative theoretical framework offering a basis for a new understanding of these relations. CAPRIGHT integrates two approaches: one addresses resource regimes, the other inequalities in capabilities. Ramón Peña-Casas and Paolo Ballerini from the OSE are currently involved in a CAPRIGHT work package on “Social dialogue, rights and capabilities - New insights on the European public action”. The aim is to assess to what extent the array of European instruments (fundamental rights, legislation, open method of coordination and other soft methods) takes into account the development of collective capabilities in the context of European social dialogue. The OSE is specifically engaged in drafting a cross-cutting report that summarises and draws together the main findings emerging from the country case studies.

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Activities

Health Care as a Public Service

The Flemish sections of the socialist trade union, the socialist Sickness Fund and the Socialist Group in the European Parliament organised a study day discussing to what extent the European Union allows for strong public services. Rita Baeten presented the issues at stake with regard to the healthcare sector.

[More info...](#) (PDF)

The European Social Model and Social Dumping

Socio-political training for trade union representatives, including from employees (Worker's Union, CNE), the transport and communication sector (CSC Transcom), and public services (CSC Services Publics), by David Natali and Cécile Barbier, Bouge, 22 February 2010. Cécile Barbier also provided socio-political training on the "European Social Model" at the Belgian Federal Public Service Social Integration, on 23 February 2010.

[More info...](#) [EN](#) | [FR](#)

EU 2020: a social perspective

Cécile Barbier dedicated her last course in the framework of the "Trade Union School" organised by the Worker's Union ([CNE](#)) to the following topic: "From the Lisbon Strategy to the EU 2020 Strategy: which direction for the New Economic Strategy of the European Union?", Namur, 8 March 2010. Bart Vanhercke explained his take on the EU 2020 Strategy in the "Master in European Journalism" of the Institut des Hautes Etudes des Communications Sociales de Bruxelles ([IHECS](#)), 17 March 2010.

[Cécile Barbier - slides...](#) [FR](#)

Cécile Barbier, newsletter coordinator - Bart Vanhercke, responsible editor

OSE asbl 13, rue P.E. Janson 1050 Bruxelles tel :32-2-5371971 www.ose.be

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