Changing Welfare States

A comment by Frank Vandenbroucke

Brussels, 29 January 2013
Changing welfare states

• core examination material!

• The EU needs a social investment pact

• principled reservations against framing policy analysis in terms of ‘best’ models ...
  
  – However, ‘social investment evidence’ = ‘Nordic evidence’?
  – Nordic Europe is a moving target
  – Internal tensions in this agenda are not to be underestimated

• How to link economic, budgetary and social strategies?
The EU needs a social investment pact

• The long-term social investment imperative must not fall victim to short-term policy orientations, i.e. ill-guided austerity (short-term ↔ long-term)

• Fiscal discipline must be allowed to deliver, i.e. collective action & support needed, e.g. symmetrical adjustment, Eurobonds, Funds... (supranational solutions ↔ welfare chauvinism)

• The political deal the EU needs is one wherein all governments pursue budgetary discipline and social investment, and are supported therein in a tangible way by the EU.

• Such a reform-oriented, forward-looking deal may contribute to creating a real sense of “reciprocity” in the EU (e.g. conditionality of Funds).
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  – Internal tensions in this ‘protection + investment’ agenda are not to be underestimated

• How to link economic, budgetary and social strategies?