

Prospects for Regions and Cities in the Lisbon Strategy (OMC)

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Atelier on

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Outline of the talk

1. The Lisbon strategy:
academic assessments
2. The OMC and why it matters
(for Regions and Cities)
3. « Lisbon 3 »: do's and don'ts



1. The Lisbon strategy: assessments

- Lisbon strategy (2000) seen as a « milestone », two ambitious goals:
 - transform the European knowledge-based economy of the 21st century
 - innovate EU governance: new forms of interaction between national practices and EU objectives

1. The Lisbon strategy: assessments

- Result: impressive literature developed
 - academic researchers, policy-makers, think tanks, experts, practitioners, EU institutions (colored papers EC, CoR)
- Multi-disciplinary debates (controversy)
 - economics, law, political science, sociology
- Different dimensions of the Strategy
 - normative foundations, legitimacy, efficacy (cognitive, procedural)

1. The Lisbon strategy: assessments

- Unsurprisingly, these assessments lead to scattered results, but *some* consensus:
 - economic and employment performance (-)
 - technocratic process: ‘consultation fatigue’ (-)
 - changed policy thinking: ‘qualified success’ (+)
 - innovate EU governance (+)
- So let us not qualify the LS as a failure too easily
 - Wim Kok (« Jobs, Jobs, Jobs »): EES discarded without serious empirical assessment (2004)

2. A « new » governance tool: OMC

- To be applied to some of the key goals of Lisbon I
 - More and better jobs
 - Modernizing social protection
 - Promoting social inclusion
- ! Lisbon is not to be reduced to OMC
 - LS contains almost 100 proposals for directives

OMC: process cycle

Launching
(2000)

Common Objectives

NAP
(NSR)

Indicators
Targets

Supported by
PROGRESS

Joint Report (!)
Peer Review

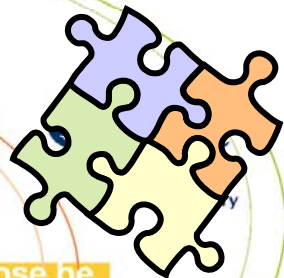
OMC elicits strong opposite reactions

- 'revolutionary potential' & 'solution to the EU's democratic deficit'



- 'rhetoric and cheap talk' & 'fashionable red herring' (harmful: distract political attention)

Puzzling!





Again, evaluations differ

MS let “1000 flowers bloom”

Inflation of OMC’s from 2000

- Organ transplantation, influenza, immigration, smoking, EU development policy, disability policy, Latin America (!)

Claim

Against all odds 'soft' OMC's do impact upon MS' Social (Inclusion) Policies

- Substantively
- Procedurally

1. Procedural changes

- Rationalisation of policies
 - Boosting statistical capacity (previous: contested statistics) – Indicators!

Procedural changes (II)

- Vertical cooperation (!)
 - Exchange of information + operational network of actors across language borders
 - “Internal-B OMC” – “unthinkable without the EU scapegoat”
 - Role federal admin B
 - “European Rescue of the Federal State”?
 - FR, IT, PT, ESP

Procedural changes (II)

- Participation

- Institutionalisation of NGO involvement in SI policies
- B from teacher to 'pupil': participation model ('people experiencing poverty') looked especially well on paper, less so in practice



2. Substantive changes

- “Child poverty”: new concept in SI policies of many MS: straight from OMC → cognitive shift
- *Remarkable*
 - Longstanding B/FR resistance against this issue (failed!)
 - Strong EU pressure, now on the agenda (BPEU 2010!)

- Internationale Dag van het Gezin -

Ik wou dat ik een koe was.

Dankzij 41 miljard Europese landbouwsteun bestaan er geen kansarme koeien. Maar wat met de 19 miljoen kansarme kinderen in Europa? Kathleen Van Brempt laat deze kinderen niet in de steek. En eist dan ook een Europese wet die een minimuminkomen voor elk gezin garandeert.

Kathleen Van Brempt
Voor een menselijker Europa.

Lijsttrekker Europa - Lijst 1
www.kathleenvanbrempt.be

sp·a

Nu zeker.



Ose
European
Social
Observatory

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Substantive changes (II)

- *Initiate* culture of evaluation and monitoring of SI policies in B/FR
- Adoption of 'targets' in N SI policies
 - B: *national* targets for *regional* competencies (education, housing etc.) based on intra-regional benchmarking

OMC and instrument hybridity

- Another reason why OMC “matters” for Regions and Cities: soft governance mechanisms are increasingly integrated in EU hard law
 - e.g. in the framework-agreement on part-time work
- Soft governance increasingly structures EU funding!
 - the European Employment Strategy and the Social Inclusion OMC are the overall framework for the substance of ESF Regulations

3. Priorities for Lisbon III

- Face (and settle) a number of trade-offs
 - between European integration and national competences (welfare)
 - between economic competitiveness and social cohesion
 - between depoliticizing policy-making and increasing participation and transparency

3. Priorities for Lisbon III

- Bring social OMCs back in the heart of the LS (de facto impact, influence on ESF)
- Strengthen its toolbox
 - indicators, including ‘participatory governance indicators’ (White Paper CoR)
 - targets: to be set ‘at most appropriate level’ (*including* Regional)

3. Priorities for Lisbon III

- Not launch additional OMC
 - CoR White Paper: OMC of regionalized coordination
 - OMC fatigue
- Consider introducing formal (legally binding) requirements for transparency and participation in soft law
- Ensure a mandate for the European Commission so that it can assess the implementation of *regional* policies

Comments/criticism/questions very
welcome, now or at:

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