



Quo Vadis EU Social Policy

Assess progress and recent changes in
social exclusion OMC

Focus and Orientation

- Progress and change over time
- Cognitive aspects of the OMC inclusion
- The specificity of the social inclusion OMC
- Empirical Focus:
 - Common objectives
 - JR on NAPS
 - - feedback
 - - creation of the frame
 - - countries' perceived reactions/adaptations

CHANGES IN COMMON OBJECTIVES

- To facilitate participation in employment and access by all to resources, rights, goods and services
- To help the most vulnerable
- To mobilise all relevant bodies
- To prevent the risks of exclusion
- Guarantee access by all to the basic resources, rights and social services, while addressing extreme forms of exclusion
- Ensure the active inclusion of all by promoting participation in the labour market and by fighting poverty and exclusion among the most marginalised
- Ensure policy coordination and involve all levels of government and relevant actors, social inclusion policies to be efficient and effective and mainstreamed into all public policies

Significance of these changes

- Narrowing of the policy goals
- Social exclusion is reframed as a marginal experience
- Activation is much more prominent
- Mobilisation becomes 'operationalisation'
- Prevention is gone

Key Questions

- Is there elaboration and deepening of the policy model? Not particularly
- Is there a relatively coherent set of policy ideas over time? No
- Some basic tensions:
 - Multi-dimensionality vs group-specific approach
 - Social policy approach vs social problems

Joint Reports, 2002, 2004, 2006

- Technical yardsticks used – whether NAPs have key ‘plan-like’ features?
- Dulcet tones/softly-softly approach intensifies over time
- Little or no evaluation of performance or relative ranking
- Reports construct a set of policy exigencies and methods
- Over time these narrow down to child poverty, activation, quality services, migrants/minority groups
- Methodologically: mainstreaming, governance, policy linkages, policy as planning

Country Groupings

- Denmark, France, Netherlands, UK

- Belgium, Ireland, Portugal, Sweden

- Austria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lux. Spain

- Ireland, Portugal, UK

- Belg., Den. Gr., Finl, Fr. NI, Sweden Austria, Germ. Italy, Lux. Spain

- Belgium, Portugal, NI Sweden,

- France. Greece Spain, Irl, Fin. UK Austria, Den. Germany Lux. Italy,

Findings

- Limited movement
- Belgium, Portugal most improved
- Ireland, UK, France, NL – usually good
- A solid block of countries at the bottom:
- Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, Italy
- ‘Mobilisation’ main element of common frame

Possible Problems/Explanation

- Cognitive inconsistencies/incoherence in the process (eg, indicators, best practice, peer review, monitoring)
- Problems with social exclusion as a frame – no effective policy model
- Insufficient or lacking case for co-ordination
- Lacking output legitimation
- Problems with method (lacking targets, voluntary nature)
- Insufficiently linked in to revised Lisbon

Key Questions Remain

- Is social OMC a cornerstone, flanking or just packaging in EU?
- To what extent is social exclusion (as against other policy approaches) a sui generis interest on the part of EU?