

# Pierre Tilly, Social Europe and European social policies. Origins, challenges and instruments

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## Social Europe and European social policies. Origins, challenges and instruments

by Pierre Tilly, researcher at the European Studies Institute, Catholic University of Louvain.

*There is an old story about a hen meeting a pig. She looks him straight in the eye and says: 'You know, we could do great things together.' 'Oh really,' replies the pig, not having given the matter much thought. 'Like what?' 'Well,' says the chicken, 'eggs and bacon, for instance.' 'Right,' says the pig. Only when he gets home does he realise belatedly that he is going to end up in slices <sup>1</sup>.*

The moral of this tale illustrates the challenge posed by building a social Europe, not only for employers and labour but for society as a whole. Employers and trade unions, not to mention governments, can do great things together at a European level, but only on the condition that they all agree to do their share.

The (short) history of social Europe is studded with trials and errors. By and large, public opinion still sees it as a rather empty, abstract matter. Yet there really is a social reality behind European integration. After all, a social Europe emerged as one of the major issues in the debate in France on the referendum on the draft constitutional treaty, much to the surprise of commentators and specialists in this field, who tended to think the subject was only of interest to the initiated <sup>2</sup>. This new concern is mainly due to the poor management of the social fallout from globalisation, which has awoken enduring fears among the citizens of the European Union, wary of plans to cut back their welfare rights. It is also due to a certain discourse, part doctrinaire, part fatalistic, that seems to disregard the social dimension of the EU. As for the Dutch 'No' vote, it seems to have had more to do with a refusal to allow Brussels to intrude too far into certain areas, in particular welfare.

Despite this difficult context, ought we, as regularly happens, to be lamenting the lack of a social Europe, something which is certainly hard to grasp in its totality? We need to give a balanced answer. The social dimension of European integration often goes hand-in-hand with a certain ambiguity, owing to the fact that European social policy is not a clone — on a larger scale — of social policy in one or other Member State. We do need to clarify things here. According to the existing treaties, Member States largely retain their sovereignty over the management of social affairs. European social policy is therefore not of the same kind, nor does it pursue the same aims, as social policies defined at a national level. The scope of its operations and instruments is narrower. By virtue of the subsidiarity principle incorporated into European legislation in 1992 <sup>3</sup>, it can thus be fully complementary.

Social Europe is nevertheless no empty concept. For the last 20 years or so, European social policy has gradually asserted itself, in a context in which economic and monetary integration and persistently high unemployment have made it even more vital to bring Europe closer to its citizens and their welfare, if only to enhance its legitimacy. European institutions in fact play an increasingly important role, through various mechanisms or instruments such as the European Employment Strategy and the over-arching Lisbon Strategy. Previously confined to the — albeit important — questions of health and safety in the workplace, combating discrimination, vocational training and the free movement of workers, the scope of social policies and special-interest programmes at a European level has broadened. The way the various mechanisms work has also become more flexible. Europe no longer restricts itself merely to coordinating employment policies. It addresses pensions, health care and social integration. This is, after all, a logical development in view of the emergence of new social problems in Europe with the single market, the single currency and the Lisbon Strategy.

Successive enlargements have also encouraged debate on Europe's social model. The arrival of new members in 2004 and 2007 was a huge challenge, highlighting the intrinsic difficulty of building a social Europe which, among other things, has to allow for widely varying systems reflecting different national backgrounds. Social Europe is, clearly, a source of friction between governments which have carried out major reforms, particularly the Scandinavian countries, the new members, obliged to modernise their social security systems at high speed to keep pace with their economic transition, and other core Member States dogged by structural unemployment and threatened with a loss of competitive advantage.

Before reviewing the key stages in its past development and identifying the present and future issues accounting for the various changes to it <sup>4</sup>, we should clarify the notion of a European social model and social cohesion. Our aim here is to show what makes Europe's socio-economic model special.

### *Taking action against inequality*

In most cases more emphasis is placed on what threatens social cohesion (unemployment, poverty, disparities in income, social exclusion and the digital gap) than on positive factors such as trust in institutions, a sense of belonging, and a mutually supportive approach, in social and fiscal terms, to living together <sup>5</sup>. The EU does not actually have an official definition of the concept of social cohesion. The Structural Funds have given it a primarily operational thrust: 'A starting point would be to link social cohesion with the objectives of the European model of society which is founded on the notion of a social market economy [...] The solidarity dimension is given practical effect through universal systems of social protection, regulation to correct market failure and a system of social dialogue' <sup>6</sup>.

Promoting social cohesion consequently boils down to taking action to reduce the disparities caused by unequal opportunities in access to employment and in income levels, or indeed to reduce the disparities between poor and rich regions <sup>7</sup>. This must be done if we are to maintain social cohesion. Otherwise disastrous social consequences, such as long-term unemployment, young people without work and poverty, will take a lasting hold, jeopardising growth and economic and social development. On this point, the Dublin Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions defines social cohesion in terms of challenges, or at the very least as a major challenge to the EU and policy-makers <sup>8</sup>. The stated objective is to narrow the widening gulf between those who derive some benefit from the changes now underway and those who gain nothing, on the sidelines of contemporary society.

### *Not a single social model*

The expression 'European social model' is regularly used at European summits without being supported by any official definition. The conclusions of the Barcelona European Summit of 2002 stipulate that 'based on good economic performance, a high level of social protection and education and social dialogue', the European social model is 'a balance between economic prosperity and social justice'. It guarantees genuine recognition for both employers and labour.

The term 'model' was deliberately chosen to distinguish Europe from the rest of the world as regards its attitude to solidarity and work or, more generally, the importance attached to social rather than economic issues. In the United States the middle classes built democracy and made a success of it. They still hold free-market values and focus on civic and individual rights. In Europe, on the other hand, the working class established democracy, giving it a strong dimension of solidarity. This background determines distinct attitudes to solidarity: in the US the choice of health care system is primarily an individual matter, whereas in Europe it is decided collectively, with solidarity depending on society as a whole. Elsewhere attitudes to solidarity take different, less institutionalised forms, based on clan or family structures governed by the principle of mutual assistance between generations.

Moreover the place of social issues varies considerably from one continent to another. In Europe social policies are seen as both a spur to social progress and a potential source of improvement in economic performance. In the US and Japan economic considerations take priority, in accordance with the principle that social policies are solely the consequence of growth in economic performance.

Looking beyond the European social model, what is really at issue is the European model of society characterised by converging patterns of behaviour and values co-existing within several major, fluid national models such as those of the Scandinavian countries, France and Germany, Britain and southern Europe.

In terms of the social security protection that Europe specifically devises and promotes, the basic idea is by and large the same from one Member State to another, with roughly the same national budget and public expenditure figures for social security (health, pensions and employment), although three models do stand

out, with due allowance for changes introduced when the new Member States joined the EU. As well as similar levels of expenditure, there is a tradition that the authorities organise public services, although there are variations between northern and southern Europe. Social Europe was built up from that model, and goes further.

## 1. Social Europe, a historical edifice

The key steps in the construction of a socially integrated Europe are now familiar, and many publications describe social Europe, however briefly <sup>9</sup>. The historical perspective is a good opportunity to consider an aspect that is still just as relevant: how can European integration help us achieve the goal of better quality of life for all EU citizens?

Each period is dominated by a particular view of what issues ought to be handled at the European level and how they should be addressed. However, the reasoning which prevailed in earlier periods never completely disappears, remaining operational in a few areas of social policy. What we see is consequently a cumulative effect.

Since the outset, European social policy has displayed considerable inventiveness in institutional terms (upward harmonisation, equal treatment for citizens of a particular country and other EU nationals, minimum standards, negotiated legislation, a charter of fundamental rights, collective bargaining, soft law, etc.). It is the outcome of a long forward march through history, but also the result of a classic process of legal construction <sup>10</sup>. Nor should we forget that it is the product of collective bargaining. The social provisions have taken shape through the various treaties and the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Communities.

### *The main steps in the history of social Europe*

#### — The ECSC as a pre-condition

Article 2 of the Treaty of Paris of 18 April 1951 establishing the ECSC — which was wound up on 23 July 2002 — set forth the Community's mission: 'to contribute to economic expansion, the development of employment and the improvement of the standard of living in the participating countries through the institution, in harmony with the general economy of the Member States, of a common market as defined in Article 4.'

The ECSC mapped out the broad lines of a social policy based on 'concrete actions which create a real solidarity', to quote the preamble to the Paris Treaty. It took a functional approach to European integration. In the minds of the High Authority and the Assembly there was a political determination to have measures adopted in the social field.

— 1958–73: the Treaty of Rome of 1957 basically left social policy in the hands of the Member States. The dominant philosophy was that the welfare state would develop thanks to economic growth made possible by liberating market forces and not just by government regulation and redistribution. The treaty nevertheless made some allowance for social concerns, setting social goals in its preamble. It laid down binding provisions, mainly based on the free movement of labour, social security for migrants and equal pay for male and female workers. The European Social Fund was set up to work in tandem with industrial redeployment programmes. There was no attempt to harmonise the various national policies but the same rights were granted to national and Community workers in each Member State. The aim was to ensure the Common Market worked smoothly and to prevent 'social dumping'. So the original provisions focused primarily on the mobility of workers and measures to protect their health and safety.

The Council of Europe's 1961 European Social Charter, or Turin Charter, was in many respects an innovative text. But it was no more than a solemn declaration without binding force.

Subsequent developments must be seen in the context of a legal framework that made little explicit reference

to social issues. Nor did social provisions receive the same attention as measures in favour of the free movement of goods and services. A chasm rapidly opened up between the generous, inclusive intentions proclaimed in the preambles to the treaties establishing the ECSC (1951) and the EEC (1957) and the institutional mechanisms that were supposed to put these good intentions into practice. Social affairs did not qualify for a ‘common policy’, unlike agriculture (Articles 3d, 38 and 47 of the Treaty of Rome) or transport (Articles 3e and 74 to 84). What is more, with a few exceptions — particularly in the case of the reform of the Social Fund in 1971–72 — Community practice proved even more restrictive than a broader interpretation of the texts would have allowed <sup>11</sup>.

In fact most social legislation remained national in origin, and Community action was subsidiary in two ways <sup>12</sup>. First, horizontal subsidiarity required legislators to consult European ‘social partners’ (management and labour), only allowing legislators to intervene if social dialogue broke down. Secondly, vertical subsidiarity meant that European labour law did not harmonise social situations but established minimum standards for the whole Community, leaving it up to national governments to apply them. As an additional precaution, countries with more demanding standards were not allowed to use European law as an excuse for lowering the existing level of protection.

— 1973–81: several European directives were adopted against a background of economic recession and mobilisation by militants at a national level. In 1974 Europe adopted its first Social Action Programme, 15 years after the Treaty of Rome and under pressure from the trade unions. The programme provided for some 40 priority actions, designed to achieve three main objectives: full employment and better jobs, employment policy, and improvements in living and working conditions.

— 1981–89: this period was marked by the resurgence of free-market economics championed by Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. In Europe the move towards economic and social integration gathered speed, the aim being to establish the single market, which contributed to the emergence of new social challenges while increasing the relevance of Community legislation. The 1985 Single Act gave the European Community wider powers in the social sphere, enabling measures relating to health and safety to be adopted by a qualified majority. Article 118a encouraged closer control of the labour market, providing for gradual harmonisation of minimum requirements for working conditions. Similarly Article 130, on economic and social cohesion, introduced the principle of European structural solidarity, with a twofold increase in its budget from 1988. The idea began to gain ground that economic recovery could not be secured by social dumping but rather by compliance with existing Community law and regional development programmes involving social partners. Article 118b gave new impetus to social dialogue with employers and labour, which received an additional boost a few years later with the Maastricht Treaty. Certain analysts nevertheless maintain that there was a pause in European social regulation and in the process of deregulation at a national level. The pros and cons of global competition prompted growing debate, amidst controversy over the process of social deregulation then under way. With the drive to complete the single market, the goal of a reparatory, redistributive social policy gradually gave way to a more dynamic conception which made the social factor an integral part of European competitiveness.

— 1989–97: this stage saw the launch of a strategy defining minimum social standards (the 1989 Community Social Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers). The basic idea was to develop a minimum regulatory basis at a European level. The charter, which was actually a political declaration signed by the Heads of Government of 11 out of 12 Member States, never came into force. It nevertheless set out a series of basic principles with a view to the building of a social Europe. The Social Policy Protocol annexed to the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 established procedures for European bodies taking decisions on social matters. One novelty was that employers and labour had to be consulted prior to any proposal for a directive in the social field. The enlargement of the European Union in 1995 to include Austria, Finland and Sweden brought about symmetrical changes with the accession of rich countries whose social security systems were already fully developed. New conceptions and different sensitivities prompted swift changes to the social Europe of 12, for instance equality between men and women, the preponderant role of the state, social inclusion and active employment policies based on a concept of work as a right but also as a duty. The newcomers also highlighted the importance of social issues as a factor in competitiveness when they completed a full-scale overhaul of their welfare systems. The overall result at the end of this period was

nevertheless disappointing, due to both the social powers vested in the Community and the voting procedure for prescriptive provisions.

— 1997 to the present day: with the addition of the Social Protocol, an employment chapter was appended to the Amsterdam Treaty, which Tony Blair's New Labour agreed to ratify. Soaring unemployment undoubtedly influenced the British decision. A dynamic driving social dialogue at European level and involving civil society developed in tandem with the construction of a solid legal framework and even a lasting body of law in fields such as worker mobility and the continuity of workers' social rights. In 2000, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union represented a major development. Then in Lisbon, in March of the same year, the 15 Member States set out ambitious quantitative social objectives for the Union with an overall strategy to achieve internal economic and social cohesion. The aim was to respond to the fourfold challenge of long-term economic growth, employment, social cohesion and sustainable development in the knowledge society. Looking to the future, the strategy sought not only to measure progress but also to set targets for the Union as a whole and for each of its Member States. Coordination of national policies was presented as the means to achieve this purpose. There have also been several recent developments in European social dialogue, including the Work Programme of the European Social Partners, which led to two separate agreements (on teleworking and work-related stress) and the development of social dialogue in specific sectors.

Throughout this historical process of European social integration, progress has been made, albeit slowly, towards a more proactive, all-embracing approach to employment policy, exemplified by the European Employment Strategy launched in Luxembourg in 1997. The transformations that have occurred in society as a result of globalisation, at both a national and a global level, have accompanied and prompted this ongoing social progress. But the development of social Europe also bears the imprint of the complexity of the problems which had to be faced, and of societal changes which were often hard to swallow. The process involved the challenging of cultural values, the transferral of powers and jurisdiction, and the acceptance of methods and resources, and included its share of reversals of progress and dissipation of efforts along the way.

As we review the progress made in the area of European social policy, it seems that more opportunities to act were missed than successes were achieved in adopting Europe-wide measures<sup>13</sup>. But European social policy should be interpreted in its historical dimension as an ongoing challenge and a process of trial and error. The supporters of Europe who have focused the greatest attention on social issues (trade unions, left-wing political parties and governments of the same complexion, some decision-makers at the European Commission, as well as academics and journalists) have long been active, seizing the opportunities which arose when the Treaty was being revised to add new social provisions. In return, the successive revisions of the Treaty have had a leverage effect on the resources of the players involved. It remains very difficult to reach any final conclusions on the ongoing process. The Europe of 27 considerably extends the range of social systems on its territory, with substantial differences in the level of development. This is a structural factor which is bound to affect the way European social policy develops in the future.

## **2. Europe-wide instruments for social policy action**

Several methods have been used to build social Europe.

- The EU has used directives and regulations to establish social standards. Since the 1950s, five major fields of social policy have been covered at the European level, in order to prevent social dumping:

- the right to work,
- equal treatment,
- free movement of workers,
- health and safety at work,
- public health.

Directives are one of the main instruments used by European social policies<sup>14</sup>.



- Negotiated legislation (the method of procedure by agreement) through social dialogue between European social partners may lead to the signing of collective European agreements at the multi-industry or sectoral levels. The two sides may reach framework agreements in the social field which the Council of the European Union may or may not approve in the form of directives <sup>15</sup>.
- The Open Method of Coordination (OMC) <sup>16</sup> is a form of ‘soft law’, based on legally non-binding processes and methods involving ‘peer pressure’, codes of conduct and benchmarking. The OMC is the fifth attempt to define a European social dimension.
- The European Social Fund, which is one of the Structural Funds, contributes to harmonising national systems in the areas of vocational training or action to combat exclusion, by co-financing national policies.
- Action programmes encourage the development of new policies such as measures to combat social exclusion and poverty.

### 3. From the European Employment Strategy to the Lisbon Strategy

The European Employment Strategy (EES), which goes back to Jacques Delors’ White Paper of 1993 and the Essen Summit, with the establishment of multilateral surveillance of employment (1994), was undoubtedly a breakthrough in building a socially integrated Europe. Modelled on Economic and Monetary Union, it was established by the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997 as part of a new chapter on employment. Political changes in 1997 and 1998 helped to make employment a priority on the European agenda. At the beginning of 1997, the Vilvoorde affair sounded a warning bell. The closure of the Renault factory there by management in Paris without first informing or consulting the workers led to a protest movement throughout Europe. The political context altered significantly. Election victories by Tony Blair in the UK and Lionel Jospin in France in the spring of 1997, followed by Gerhard Schröder in Germany in September 1998, saw the emergence of a ‘pink’ Europe with Socialists represented in the governments of 13 out of 15 countries and running 11 of them, including four of the largest countries (Italy, France, Germany and the UK). Admittedly they did not agree on all subjects.

The Luxembourg Employment Summit in November 1997, before the ratification of the Amsterdam Treaty, launched the EES, the aim being to make serious progress within five years. The strategy, which marked the start of a new dynamic in employment policy, was based on thematic priorities, grouped together in four pillars and scheduled to be carried out in three major stages:

- common guidelines would be proposed for employment (guidelines with short-term deadlines);
- each year, these guidelines would be turned into National Action Plans (NAPs) for employment, to be implemented by Member States;
- the plans would be analysed and evaluated by the Commission and the Council, with the results set out in a joint employment report whose findings would underpin the conclusions: a readjustment of the guidelines and country-specific recommendations for the employment policies of Member States.

New methods were tried, such as the setting of a medium-term agenda, exchanges of good practice and comparative analysis (peer review) <sup>17</sup>, and multilateral supervision of NAPs.

The launch of the EES in 1997 marked the emergence of a new, dominant economic benchmark which broke with the Keynesian era. The new Community provisions laid down in the Amsterdam Treaty went hand-in-hand with new activities. A Community agenda on employment was taking shape which had the potential to alter national policy agendas. This led to significant changes for employment governance and, more broadly, social policies.

*OMCs and the Lisbon Strategy*

The strategy adopted in Lisbon in the spring of 2000 and named after the Portuguese capital was a way of bringing the then 15 EU Member States together to work for an ambitious, common goal. It sought to make Europe the most competitive, dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, thereby trumping its economic rivals, primarily the US. This was an idea which was easier said than done. Faced with the level of performance achieved by the American and Asian competitive models, Europe urgently needed to launch a major plan to catch up with and overtake its rivals. According to the experts, progress in Europe had been at a complete standstill since the recession of the 1970s. At the time there was widespread support for the Lisbon Strategy, because the objectives it proclaimed were evenly spread around three pillars: the economy, social issues and the environment.

Implementation of the Lisbon Strategy opened the way for a Europe which, despite its diversity, stood united behind shared values, including social objectives — action against poverty, social cohesion, the European social model, an inclusive labour market and good jobs — on the same footing as its economic and environmental objectives. Europe thus laid the foundations for what aspires to be a real strategy for forward-looking, sustainable development, serving present and future generations <sup>18</sup>.

Even then some commentators dismissed this optimistic, slightly naive stance, objecting that the whole thing was very probably just a smokescreen. The prime objective was still to develop an essentially economic Europe, based, in particular, on a single market and currency, and on cutting costs and public deficits.

Since 2000 the Lisbon Strategy has prompted a great deal of commentary, analysis and criticism.

The competitiveness pillar has resulted in the greatest breakthroughs, but also prompted much discussion and criticism. The opening of a range of markets to competition, such as telecommunications, energy, air transport and postal services, is the outcome of a process of deregulation still under way, on the lines of the Services (ex-Bolkestein) Directive, which provoked controversy while it was being adopted.

It is a sign of the times that the Lisbon Strategy is accompanied by strings of policy appraisals in individual Member States based on costed objectives. At each spring summit, the European Council reviews progress reports on the various processes that make up the strategy. A mid-term decision is taken to check whether the intermediate targets have actually been met and, if necessary, to revise the strategy.

In 2004 a High-Level Group chaired by Wim Kok (the former Social Democratic Prime Minister of the Netherlands) published a damning assessment: the results achieved over five years fell far short of the halfway mark that should have been reached on the way to 2010 (for instance, only 6 million jobs had been created, compared with the 22 million target for the full 10-year period). The group's report identified several reasons for the setback: 'poor coordination, an overloaded agenda and conflicting priorities', but also 'external events' since 2000. But the main problem, according to the Kok report, was the lack of resolute political action by Member States. The report proposed focusing the strategy on fewer targets, with business competitiveness at the top of the list.

The evaluation process highlighted the need to adjust the EES so as to bring it closer in line with the Lisbon Strategy and cope with new challenges, and to correct the persistent major structural weaknesses <sup>19</sup>. It is now common knowledge that the rather unrealistic costed objectives set in 2000 are not likely to be achieved by 2010.

The European summit in spring 2005 set two priorities: growth and employment. The Commission considered that employment was just the automatic consequence of market deregulation. The social objectives dependent on growth became considerably less ambitious.

Moreover the change of direction enshrined in the Lisbon Strategy emphasises the fact that social protection systems and employment policies need to be modernised. Major reforms in systems of public administration, inspired by New Public Management theories advocating less but more effective state intervention through deregulation of public services and major networks, are putting heavy constraints on social systems <sup>20</sup>. This



is prompting widespread opposition, reflecting fears that the social dimension is being shelved. The tensions between such modernisation and plans for European social harmonisation are potentially explosive. The increasing primacy given to individual rights as the path to modernisation (a genuinely new social ideology) by conferring growing responsibility on individuals, though basically commendable, demands attention in so far as this approach often disregards the context in which citizens are living, and their need for family and friends and a certain form of collective solidarity.

Although the European level is in danger of being invalidated by national and regional reforms (a form of modernisation represented by an overall trend towards devolution and calls for greater subsidiarity), one aspect of deregulation has restored European control. The globalisation of the economy, with its scope for keener competition, is causing an immense wave of industrial restructuring and change, with major social consequences for workers in different countries. Individual regions are faced with similar structural difficulties.

#### **4. Governance of the social sector in Europe: a model in need of reform?**

Whatever the benefits of a socially integrated Europe (complementarity between levels and the availability of many instruments such as the Structural Funds, the OMC and the Charter of Fundamental Rights), the diversity and number of Member States, currently 27, represent a threat to its development. Some countries are not convinced of Europe's social 'added value'. Allowance must be made for countries having divergent interests and sensitivities; the Union can only act as a driving and coordinating force, with national governments having almost complete responsibility for the practical application of measures. A *quid pro quo* rationale prevails over the positive sum game approach. The Commission is increasingly emphasising plans to pare down its output of rules and regulations, as part of 'cutting the red tape' <sup>21</sup>.

The various developments raise a number of basic questions. Can Europe be more socially minded than the Member States in their own territories, in the face of international social challenges such as the globalisation of the economy, uneven economic development and EU enlargement? Is there not more to social policy than just protecting the economic rights of workers and all citizens, their individual rights? Should it not also lead to political power being used to amend, redistribute or rectify the economic system on the basis of the solidarity principle? In other words, it does not only concern social protection but also immigration, regional disparities and sectors in recession. We can at any rate conclude that we are witnessing a renewal of the ways in which the social sector is governed and of the role of the authorities in relation to employment, particularly with the establishment of increasingly strong links between the local and European levels.

This brings us, in conclusion, to look more closely at some of the issues now at stake for the European social model. One of the main issues, and no simple matter, is the social governance of the European Union, its ability to manage social questions with the Member States in the context of a changing society. One feature of this context that has been demonstrated by a number of studies seems to be the shift from a social or welfare state — though this term is improper — to a social investment state, the term used in Canada, or an active social state, a more European designation. It should be borne in mind that the social democratic compromise, which became a full-blown paradigm from the end of the Second World War to the 1970s, secured a high level of social protection across the board that was often free of charge in areas such as education and health. This was achieved in exchange for good industrial relations. Its ideological basis was dominated by socialist concepts (compulsory participation, general applicability, state intervention), economic theory (market economics, Fordism and Keynesianism) and an institutional foundation, namely the principle of joint management of social security organisations.

For the past 20 years, all social models have been subjected to similar pressures, upstream with the change in resources on the 'supply' side, and downstream with changes in social demand. The neo-liberal thinking of the 1980s has replaced the social democratic consensus with a new political paradigm by borrowing two key concepts from traditional right-wing thinking: the essential, overriding value of the market and massive privatisation of all human and social activity.

The situation in Europe with regard to social questions is marked by different interpretations firstly of the

causes of unemployment and the remedies to be applied, and secondly of the importance of job quality, labour costs, education and training. The most plausible outcome for the future is one in which the various models and approaches co-exist in a framework which makes the most effective provision for their compatibility. A brutal offensive to impose a single, uniform social model on the whole of Europe seems neither possible nor desirable. But progress is necessary and can well be achieved. In the background, there is shared experience and an acceptance of the differences that constitute the driving force behind the European social model. On this we may build. The challenge is to reformulate the essentials for life together in a society of 27 members.

## Notes:

- (1) 'Notre Europe' study and research group, *L'Europe revisite son modèle social ou l'histoire de la poule et du cochon*, Seminar on developments in industrial relations in the European Union countries, Luxembourg, 11 September 1997.
- (2) M. Jouen and C. Palpant, *L'Europe sociale à l'épreuve de l'élargissement*, Policy Paper No 15, Paris, Notre Europe, 2005.
- (3) As soon as the first European social action programme was drawn up in 1974, it proved necessary to define a guiding principle for the work of harmonising standards and eliminating duplication, by determining the most relevant level for the taking of decisions in each case.
- (4) R. Castel, *Les métamorphoses de la question sociale. Une chronique du salariat*, Paris, Fayard, 1995; P. Ronsavallon, *La nouvelle question sociale. Repenser l'État providence*, Paris, Seuil, 1995, 227 p.
- (5) J. Jenson, *Mapping social cohesion*, Ottawa, Canadian Policy Research Networks, 1998.
- (6) European Union, *First report on Economic and Social Cohesion*, Luxembourg, OOEPEC, 1996, p. 14.
- (7) S. Paugam (ed.), *L'exclusion, l'état des savoirs*, Paris, La Découverte, 1996, 582 p.
- (8) C. Ball, *Bridging the Gulf. Improving social cohesion in Europe. The work of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (1984–1993)*, Luxembourg, OOEPEC, 1994, 33 p.
- (9) Many studies have been published, including one by Raymond Rifflet, who was involved in all the battles for a social Europe in the 1980s through, among others, the *Cahiers socialistes*. R. Rifflet, 'Bilan et évaluation de la politique sociale communautaire (1952–1982)', from J. Vandamme (ed.), *Pour une nouvelle politique sociale en Europe*, Paris, Economica, 1984, pp. 13–27. For the emergence of social legislation in Western Europe over the long term, see L. Magnusson and B. Stråth (eds.), *A European Social Citizenship? Preconditions for future policies from a historical perspective*, Brussels, PIE-Peter Lang, 2004, 361 p.
- (10) Cf. in particular C. De la Porte and P. Pochet, *Building Social Europe through the Open Method of Co-Ordination*, Brussels, PIE-Peter Lang, 2002, 313 p.
- (11) R. Rifflet, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
- (12) O. Quintin and B. Favarel-Dapas, *L'Europe sociale, enjeux et réalités*, Paris, La Documentation française, 1999, 158 p.
- (13) P. Pochet, 'The OMC and the construction of social Europe', from J. Zeitlin and P. Pochet (eds.), *The open method of co-ordination in action. The European employment and social inclusion strategies*, Brussels, PIE-Peter Lang, 2005, p. 42.
- (14) G. Falkner, O. Treib, M. Hartlapp and S. Leiber (eds.), *Complying with Europe. EU Harmonisation and Soft Law in the Member States*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, 406 p.
- (15) Three framework agreements have so far been concluded between UNICE, the ESC and CEEP and turned into a Community directive: parental leave (1995), part-time working (1997) and fixed-term work contracts (1999). There have also been two notable failures: information and consultation of workers in national companies, which forced the European Commission to launch the legislative procedure which came to an end in October 2001 under the Belgian Presidency. Another failure concerned the regulating of temporary work.
- (16) The OMC was officially adopted at the Lisbon European Council in March 2000. Member States undertook to adopt national measures in a political framework defined at European level and to report on their action at regular intervals.
- (17) This method involves identifying the best performances on the labour market in the EU and highlighting best practices for each aspect of the EES.
- (18) Nota Bene, *European Social Observatory Newsletter*, No 136–137, p. 14.
- (19) The future of the European Employment Strategy. A strategy for full employment and better jobs for all (COM (2002) 416, 17 July 2002 and COM (2003) 6, no date).
- (20) G. Bouckaert and C. Pollitt, *Public Management Reform. A Comparative Analysis*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, 314 p.
- (21) G. Verheugen, press conference on 'Better regulation', 16 March 2005.