

European Economic and Social Committee

- Principles for effective and reliable welfare provision systems (2015/SOC 520)
- Rapporteur: Prof. Bernd Schlüter

- EU also founded as a community of values

- ## Starting point

- social policy efforts of the EU, in particular the Commission, the Council and the Social Protection Committee, over recent decades
- social priorities laid down in the Treaties and in general social policy commitments
- Europe 2020 strategy: combating poverty, etc.
- development of common social policy challenges and objectives
- attempts made at implementation through OMC, recommendations, comparisons, best practice procedures, data collection

The reality in the EU today

- **Some limited progress, a number of setbacks, high level of stagnation**
- **Increase in wealth and poverty**
- **Reduction in welfare provision during the crisis**
- **The following are still not universal in the EU:**
 - guaranteed sufficient subsistence support**
 - an active labour market policy**
 - active assistance for the homeless**
 - collectively financed long-term care**
 - basic healthcare provision**
 - clear legal and financial protection for independent welfare providers**
 - effective inclusion of people with disabilities, etc.**

Contradictions between...

- the social objectives of the Treaties and the dominance of single market freedoms
- common values and current welfare systems
- social objectives and crisis management through economic and budgetary policy
- commitments to solidarity and absence of collective financing systems
- expenditure and the effective output of systems
- public social responsibility and privatisation
- EU declarations of intent in the area of social policy and competence of Member States
- competitive opportunities in a globalised economy and efforts actually being made in the areas of education, empowerment and inclusive labour markets

Examples: Principles of Welfare Systems I

- **Collective financing** of welfare provision through taxes or social security contributions: including all types of income and all sections of the population
- **Legal certainty for users:** a reliable legal basis for welfare provision through social legislation or similar instruments: Conditions, objectives and target groups for welfare provision, complaints procedures. Ability to choose between different welfare services and types of service, e.g. residential or non-residential
- **Legal certainty for welfare services:** legal clarification of the status of independent welfare providers, a legal framework for their services, quality and financing from public funds

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Examples: Principles of Welfare Systems II

- **Good framework conditions for non-profit services**, civil society actors from the areas of social policy and service provision. Rules for taking profits from for-profit enterprises when they receive public funding
- **Guaranteeing working conditions and training** for employees working in welfare services and public welfare administration. Effective welfare services have an academic foundation and require a thorough analysis of individual needs
- **Promoting individual responsibility and protection** of the individual
- **Acceptance of Member States' differing systems**, cultures and traditions within the framework of a European community of values

- Thank you for your attention!

Specific suggestions for implementing social policy principles

- Social policy as an important pillar of EU policy
- Council decision: social policy principles and specific benchmarks as voluntary MS commitments
- Drafting more consistent and specific recommendations in the European semester, greater openness in the Member States and more consistent evaluation
- Linking the principles to the approval of ESF funding
- Incorporating social policy principles into the EU's economic governance, crisis and single market policies
- More rigorous social impact assessments of all policies based on social policy principles
- Systematic involvement of civil society and social partners