



**Dear Reader,**

The European Centre continues its series of Policy Briefs with a January issue. For 2007, we have planned several Policy Briefs. The issues will cover a wide range of current research topics from our research pillars “Work, Wealth and Welfare” and “Health and Care”.

Sincerely yours,

**Annette Hexelschneider,**

Head of Knowledge and Information Management Support Unit

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## Policy Briefs

### Multi-city Study on Quantities and Financing of Illicit Drug Consumption

In this Policy Brief Irmgard Eisenbach-Stangl gives an overview of the ongoing project that examines the per capita consumption of selected illegal substances – heroin, cocaine, amphetamines, ecstasy and cannabis – as well as the expenses for drug consumption on the consumer side in six European cities (Amsterdam, London, Prague, Turin, Warsaw and Vienna).

Read more about: [Policy Brief](#)

For further information please contact: [Irmgard Eisenbach-Stangl](#)

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## Projects

### New Project – Quality in and Equality of Access to Healthcare Services: HealthQUEST

In this new project for the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the European Centre will cooperate with the European Health Management Association and a network of international partners.



The main objectives are:

- To identify and analyse barriers for access to health care services faced by vulnerable groups in society, and especially those most exposed to social exclusion;
- To review the various policy initiatives taken by the Member States to realise the objective of access for all, including the analysis of good practice examples;
- To highlight and describe the most effective policy measures to ensure access to health care for the most disadvantaged (including a case-study on people with mental health problems);
- To help determine the extent to which increased access to and quality of health care services can contribute to combat poverty and social exclusion and increase social inclusion.

Eight countries will be studied in-depth: Finland, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Romania, and the United Kingdom. The project started in January 2007 and will be completed by December.

Read more about: [Project Website](#)

For further information please contact: [Manfred Huber](#)

### **Completed Project – “Effects of Changes in Tax-Benefit Policies in Austria”**

The aim of this project funded by the Jubiläumsfonds of the Austrian National Bank was to evaluate whether policy reforms in Austria between 1998 and 2005 were successful in meeting redistributive objectives and in reducing poverty. The period under review is split into two parts: Important changes in the period 1998 to 2003 were the tax reform 2000, the introduction of the universal child care benefit as well as increases in family-targeted benefits. In the period from 2003 to 2005 the tax reform 2004/5 was introduced and contributions to health insurance were raised. For the analysis we used the tax-benefit micro-simulation model EUROMOD.

Changes in the tax-benefit system from 1998 to 2003 in total led to a significant increase in disposable household income (on average 1.1%). Gains in disposable income were the higher the lower the income. The progressive nature is also illustrated by decreasing overall poverty rates. Changes in the tax-benefit system from 2003 to 2005 in sum led to an average gain of 0.4% in disposable household income. In general, the measures had no significant impact on income distribution and poverty. Another important part of the analysis related to the share of instruments (social security contributions, income taxes, cash benefits) paid/ received per income group and to the redistributive impact of the instruments over time. The analysis was completed by an assessment of the redistributive impact of two hypothetical policy changes in favour of lower income groups: the continuous introduction of employees' social security contributions above the lower threshold for contributions (“Geringfügigkeitsgrenze”) and the yearly indexation of family benefits.

For further information please contact: [Michael Fuchs](#)



## **New Papers – Accurate Income Measurement for the Assessment of Public Policies (AIM-AP)**

This project will improve the comparability, scope and applicability of tools, methods and data for the measurement of income and the analysis of the effects of policies on inequality, poverty and social inclusion.

It includes three linked projects on:

- The distributional effects of non-cash incomes and the implementation of a more comprehensive income definition.
- The implications of (and methods to account for) errors in targeting social benefits, tax evasion, and measurement error in income data.
- Incorporation of the effects of indirect as well as direct taxes and social benefits in redistribution analysis.

A series of papers will be published on our website. The first papers are:

- “The distributional impact of public education expenditure in Italy” by Mattia Makovec. It is a draft version and comments are welcomed by the author.
- “The distributional impact of ‘imputed rent’ in Italy” by Conchita D’Ambrosio and Chiara Gigliarano.

Read more about: [AIM-AP, Papers](#)

For further information please contact: [Orsolya Lelkes](#)

## **I-CUE Feasibility Study Slovak Republic**

The series of studies that explore the feasibility of introducing EUROMOD in the New Member States mentioned in our last newsletter has been continued with the Slovak Republic.

Read more about: [I-CUE, Feasibility Studies](#)

For further information please contact: [Orsolya Lelkes](#)

## **Involvements**

### **“Promoting Full Employment and Decent Work for All”**

Bernd Marin took part in the 45th session of the Commission for Social Development of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (Division for Social Policy and Development) in New York, 7 to 16 February 2007.



The Commission reviewed the priority theme “Promoting Full Employment and Decent Work for All” and evaluated plans and programmes of action for social groups, including older persons, youth and persons with disabilities.

Bernd Marin also participated in the briefing series on recent major developments and trends in global ageing hosted by the AARP Global Aging Program in collaboration with the United Nations Programme on Ageing. The briefing series took place at the occasion of the 5th anniversary of the adoption of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, a milestone in ageing policies worldwide.

For further information please contact: [Bernd Marin](#)

## 2007 UNECE Conference on Ageing

In October 2007, the Spanish Government will host the UNECE Conference on Ageing that will conclude the first five-year cycle of review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) in the UNECE region.

In preparing this conference, the UNECE Secretariat is establishing an Expert Group expected to provide policy advice and expert assistance to the intergovernmental Preparatory Committee of the Conference. Bernd Marin and Asghar Zaidi have been invited to join this Expert Group.

Read more about: [MA:IMI – Mainstreaming Ageing: Indicators to Monitor Implementation Follow-up Phase of the “Monitoring RIS for the MIPAA”](#)

For further information please contact: [Bernd Marin](#), [Asghar Zaidi](#)

## Events

### Online Documents of Past Events

EC International Seminar “Modelling the Capability to Be Free of Time and Income Poverty”  
The documents of our last International Seminar are [online](#) now.

Workshop on “The Usage of EU-SILC Data” organised by Statistik Austria  
The presentations are [online](#) now. Among them the presentation by Michael Fuchs.



## **26-27 February – Vienna: Task Force Monitoring RIS and the Expert Group for the UNECE Conference on Ageing**

The Joint Meeting of the Task Force Monitoring RIS and the Expert Group for the UNECE Conference on Ageing took place in Vienna. Bernd Marin and Asghar Zaidi spoke about aspects of Commitment 4: “To adjust social protection systems in response to demographic changes and their social and economic consequences”.

Read more about: [MA:IMI – Mainstreaming Ageing: Indicators to Monitor Implementation Follow-up Phase of the “Monitoring RIS for the MIPAA”](#)

For further information please contact: [Bernd Marin](#), [Asghar Zaidi](#)

## **1 March – Brussels: Population Ageing – Towards an Improvement of the Quality of Life?**

This International Conference will be organised by the Belgian Platform on Population and Development under the auspices of the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (DGDC) and the Study Centre of the Flemish Government (SVR). Asghar Zaidi will speak on “The Madrid Declaration and the Improvement of the Quality of Life”

For further information please contact: [Asghar Zaidi](#)

## **9-10 March – Lisbon: From Lisbon to Lisbon**

Orsolya Lelkes was invited to participate in an initiative called “From Lisbon to Lisbon”, including a meeting on 9-10 March in Lisbon. This event gathers experts in the field of poverty and social exclusion from different European countries in order to work out a set of proposals to assist the Portuguese Presidency of the EU in the 2nd half of 2007 in reinforcing the Social Inclusion strategy on the agenda of the European Union.

For further information please contact: [Orsolya Lelkes](#)

## **13-15 March – Ljubljana: Seminar on National Health Accounts**

The European Centre currently assists colleagues of WHO-Europe and the World Bank to organise this first workshop to bring together experts on National Health Accounts from a broad group of Southern European Countries. Manfred Huber will present the conceptual framework of National Health Accounts and do a workshop session on statistical challenges in measuring health expenditure.

For further information please contact: [Manfred Huber](#)



## Publications

### Peer-Reviewed Journal:

Kränzl-Nagl, Renate/ Mierendorff, Johanna (2007) "Kindheit im Wandel – Annäherungen an ein komplexes Phänomen" (Changing Childhood – Approaching a Complex Phenomenon). In: Sozialwissenschaftliche Studiengesellschaft (SWS) Rundschau, Sonderheft "Kindliche Lebenswelten", 1/2007, 3-25

For further information please contact: [Renate Kränzl-Nagl](#)

### Working Papers:

EUROMOD: Working Paper by our Research Affiliate Horacio Levy

Figari, F./ Levy, H./ Sutherland, H. (2007) Using the EU-SILC for Policy Simulation: Prospects, Some Limitations and Suggestions

Read more about: [Working Paper](#)

For further information please contact: [Horacio Levy](#)

### Website:

We are pleased to announce that the fifth update of the Monitoring RIS Website is now online. Next to many other items, it includes new material in the Regional Tools section, such as the Directory of Research on Ageing in Africa, new national strategies (for example the Austrian strategy for social protection) and new documents in our Normative Frameworks section, including The Arab Plan of Action on Ageing to the Year 2012.

To receive the announcement for updates you can register on the "Next update" page. We look forward to an increasingly comprehensive and interesting website, thanks to your suggestions, and invite you to submit any information you regard as relevant and that could help to enhance the website's accuracy. For that purpose, please use the online forms or communicate directly to the following address: [risweb@euro.centre.org](mailto:risweb@euro.centre.org)

Read more about: [Monitoring RIS Website](#), [Next update registration](#)

For further information please contact: [Annette Hexelschneider](#)

### Newspaper Articles:

[Marin, Bernd \(2005-2007\) Various articles in Der Standard, Vienna, 2007](#)

For further information please contact: [Bernd Marin](#)



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