



Dear Reader,

We have the pleasure to inform you that our former Spanish Board Member Mr. Aurelio Fernandez López has become Chairman of the Social Protection Committee (SPC) of the European Commission for a period of two years. More information about the work of the SPC can be found on its [website](#).

Annette Hexelschneider

Head of Knowledge and Information Management Support Unit

Policy Brief

Intoxication and Intoxicated Behaviour in Contemporary European Cultures: Myths, Realities and the Implications for Policy, (Prevention) Practice and Research

This very topical Policy Brief by Irmgard Eisenbach-Stangl (EC) and Betsy Thom (Institute of Social and Health Research, School of Health and Sciences, Middlesex University, London) is the 25th issue of our many times downloaded series of Policy Briefs.

Abstract:

Over recent years, media and policy attention has highlighted “binge” drinking as a social problem, which had spread across Europe. Viewed predominantly as a youth problem, the focus of concern has been on young people’s drinking and on the behaviours and harms associated with it in relation to public health, public safety and public order.

This emphasis has neglected examination of the wider issue of “intoxication” and “intoxicated behaviours”. But to understand youthful binge drinking and associated behaviours, and to find ways of intervention to prevent or reduce harm, it is necessary to understand the prevailing concept(s) of acceptable and unacceptable forms of intoxication and intoxicated behaviours and its/their wider social and cultural determinants.

Read more about: [Policy Brief, intoxication workshop](#)

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



Projects

European Observatory on the Social Situation 2009

A consortium including the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Tárki (HU) and ISER – University of Essex (UK), with Applica (BE) as the coordinator, has recently won the contract to coordinate the Network on Income Distribution and Living Conditions, which is part of the Observatory. The aim of this European Observatory is to improve the European Commission's capacity to monitor socio-economic and demographic developments in the European Union. Our team of researchers, as already done over the period 2005-2008, will monitor trends and initiate quantitative and qualitative analyses in relevant areas across Europe, including income, wealth, the impact of taxes and benefits, consumption, living conditions, time use, social mobility as well as social inclusion and participation.

Read more about: [European Centre involvement from 2005 – today](#),
[general overview of the European Observatory on the Social Situation and Demography](#)

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

EUROMOD Update

The European Centre will continue its work within EUROMOD, created by an international team of experts, under a newly awarded grant by the European Commission. The grant will be used to update and upgrade the computer-based research tool, and to extend it to cover the whole enlarged European Union over the next three years. The funds will also be used to raise awareness among researchers, international bodies and Governments of how EUROMOD can be applied to measure the impact of tax and benefit policies on people's living standards and ultimately tackle inequality and poverty. Building upon the European Centre's experience within the I-CUE project, the Centre's team will be responsible for the enlargement of the model to the New Member States of the EU, and will collaborate closely with the project leader Prof Holly Sutherland from ISER.

Read more about: [EC project part](#), [EUROMOD overview](#)

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

Study on Child poverty

The project aims to assist the development of more coherent and integrated policies to combat child poverty and social exclusion in Member States in the context of the European Social Inclusion Strategy. The main aim of the planned study on child poverty is to provide a detailed framework for such a policy mix by

- providing empirical evidence on the main determinants of child poverty and social exclusion in Europe and across the Member States;



- providing an overview and assessing the relative effectiveness of existing policies in Member States to prevent and reduce child poverty and social exclusion in the area of income support, access to the labour market of parents and access to enabling services;
- identifying a reduced set of indicators which best reflect the multi-dimensional nature of child well-being and is adequate for monitoring policies that aim to reduce child poverty and social exclusion and enhance human capital accumulation of upcoming generations; and
- presenting the draft of the Study at a seminar.

The Study is conceived as a follow-up to the work carried out in 2007 by the Commission and the Member States in the context of the European Strategy for Social Inclusion. The Study will use in an intensive way the report prepared by the EU Task Force on Child Poverty and Child Well-Being. The recommendations of the Task Force were formally adopted by all Member States and the Commission in January 2008, and can therefore be used now as an EU acquis in this field to further build upon.

The study is financed by the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. A kick-off meeting took place in Budapest, 19 February 2009.

Read more about: [project](#)

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

Events

Past Events

29 January 2009, Brussels (Belgium): Accurate Income Measurement for the Assessment of Public Policies (AIM-AP) – Dissemination Seminar

Asghar Zaidi participated in this seminar for the European Centre. AIM-AP was an international collaborative project funded by the European Commission 6th Framework Programme and coordinated by the Institute for Social and Economic Research at the University of Essex. Its main aim was to 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 involved three linked projects (listed below), which took a range of approaches across a mix of ten EU Member States.

Read more about: [Non-cash incomes](#) (education, health care, etc.), [Allowing for tax evasion and non take-up of benefits](#), [Indirect taxes](#), [European Centre involvement](#)

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



29 January 2009, Brussels (Belgium): European Observatory on Demography and the Social Situation – Bilateral meeting with the European Commission, Directorate General Employment and Social Affairs

Orsolya Lelkes represented the European Centre at the meeting. The topics were:

- Expected contribution of the Network to the Social Situation Report 2009,
- Research Notes on special topics (including, e.g. Access to adequate housing, Effects of the financial crisis on housing and the risk of poverty, The impact of income in kind on income distribution and the risk of poverty, Measuring wealth and the implications for measures of distribution and the risk of poverty, Opinions and perceptions of income distribution in EU countries),
- Content of the Annual Report 2009,
- Publication of the Annual Report 2008.

Read more about: [European Centre involvement](#)

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

Publications

Working Papers

Colombino, Ugo/ Locatelli, Marilena/ Narazani, Edlira/ O'Donoghue, Cathal/ Shima, Isilda (2008) 'Behavioural and Welfare Effects of Basic Income Policies: A Simulation for European Countries', Dipartimento di Economia "S. Cagnetti de Martiis" Working Paper No. 6/2008

Abstract:

We develop and estimate a micro-econometric model of household labour supply in four European countries representative of different economies and welfare policy regimes: Denmark, Italy, Portugal and United Kingdom. We then simulate, under the constraint of constant total net tax revenue, the effects of 10 hypothetical tax-transfer reforms, which include various alternative versions of a Basic Income policy. We produce various indexes and criteria according to which the reforms can be ranked. The exercise can be considered as one of empirical optimal taxation, where the optimization problem is solved computationally rather than analytically. As long as the ranking of reforms is done according to welfaristic criteria it turns out that the most successful policies are those involving non means-tested versions of basic income and adopting progressive tax-rules. When other criteria (such as the implied top marginal tax rate or the effect on female labour supply) are also taken into account, the picture changes: universalistic policies remain optimal and feasible in countries like Denmark where female participation rates are very high; instead, in countries with low female participation rates (like Italy) universalistic policies appear to be too costly in terms of implied top marginal tax rates and in terms of adverse effects on female participation, and means-tested policies such as Work-Fare or Negative Income Tax seem more desirable.

Read more about: [working paper](#)



Labour Supply Modelling in Italy when a Minimum Income Scheme is an Option

The newsletter of the Italian Agency of Research and Legislation (AREL) “europa lavoro economica” (April 2008) discussed the working paper “Labour Supply Modelling in Italy when a Minimum Income Scheme is an Option” by Edlira Narazani and Isilda Shima (2008) in the context of the introduction of the Minimum Income guarantee schemes for poor workers in France and how this approach could be implemented in Italy.

Read more about: [newsletter](#) (in Italian)

For further information please contact: [Isilda Shima](#)

Book contribution

Kränzl-Nagl, Renate (2009) ‘Die Geschichte von Veronika, Isabella und Martin im Spiegel der UN-Kinderrechtskonvention’ [The Story of Veronika, Isabella and Martin in the Context of the UN-Convention on the Rights of the Child], in Kindsein zwischen Leben und Überleben [Being a Child between Living and Surviving] edited by SOS Kinderdorf, Studienverlag Innsbruck/Wien

The book launch event will take place in Vienna, 26th March 2009, 7 p.m. [WUK/Projektraum](#).

Vanhuyse, Pieter (2009) ‘Power, Order, and the Politics of Social Policy in Central and Eastern Europe’, in Cerami, Alfio/Vanhuyse, Pieter (eds.), Post-Communist Welfare Pathways: Theorising Social Policy Transformations in Central and Eastern Europe, forthcoming. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

This chapter discusses the use of power to safeguard political stability by policy-makers in four post-communist cases: Hungary and Poland, and Estonia and Latvia. I emphasize how post-communist elites could significantly influence which new social risks to accommodate, and which existing social cleavages to play down or accentuate. For instance, recent advances in political economy (Alesina and La Ferera 2005) and social capital theory (Putnam 2007) have documented the manifold negative effects of ethno-linguistic heterogeneity on variables such as public good provision, and other forms of social solidarity. But my discussion of Estonia and Latvia points out how Baltic power-holders have proactively remodelled the distribution of transition winners and losers along ethnic lines. They thereby designed public policies and shaped social solidarity in ways that made existing levels of ethno-linguistic heterogeneity politically more salient, at the expense of class and other social cleavages.

Read more about: [as working paper](#)



Peer-Reviewed Journals

Pieter Vanhuysse (ed.) (2008) 'Special Review Articles Section: Advances in the Study of Post-Communist States and Public Administrations', Czech Sociological Review 44(6).

The complete 5-piece Review Article Section, mentioned in our last Newsletter, is now downloadable in its entirety, featuring contributions by Pieter Vanhuysse, Sean Hanley, Anna Grzymala-Busse, Conor O'Dwyer, and Scott Gehlbach.

Read more about: [review articles section](#)

Tepe, Markus/Vanhuysse, Pieter (2009) 'Are Aging Welfare States on the Path to Gerontocracy? Evidence from 18 OECD Democracies, 1980-2002', Journal of Public Policy, 29 (1): 1-28.

This paper has now been pre-published online as the lead article in the first issue of JPP of 2009, and it will be distributed in hard copy in April.

Read more about: [journal article](#), [working paper](#)

For further information please contact: [Pieter Vanhuysse](#)

Journals

Zaidi, Asghar (2009) 'New Deal in a New Light', Public Service Review, European Union, upcoming March Issue 17

In his article, Asghar Zaidi explains the New Deal, Britain's tailored welfare-to-work programme and how it could influence European policy.

Read more about: [Public Service Review homepage](#)

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

Newspaper Articles

[Marin, Bernd \(2005-2009\) Various articles in Der Standard, in Die Presse, in Format, in Kleine Zeitung, in Salzburger Nachrichten, Vienna, Graz, Salzburg, 2009](#)

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



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