

**European Symposium: Family policies matter!
- National policies against poverty and social exclusion of families**

Organizer: Deutscher Caritasverband e.V.- German Caritas association
Date: 22nd and 23rd of January 2014
Location: Permanent Representation of the Federal Republic of Germany to the European Union

Speakers:

- Prof. Beat Fux, University of Salzburg
- Dr. Karin Jurczyk, German Youth Institute
- Georg Kaesehagen-Schwehn, German Caritas association
- Prof. Dr. Peter Abrahamson, University of Copenhagen
- Sissel Garval, „Familiens Hus“, Denmark
- Brigitte Alsberge, Secours catholique
- Francine Guilbert, La maison des familles à Auchel (Nord-Pas-de-Calais)
- Tadej Strehovec, Slovenia
- Alenka Petek, Caritas Ljubljana
- Johanna Kotschi, Head of the Division for “International Family Policy, Migration and Social Integration” at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Woman and Youth in Germany

Some bullet points from the Symposium:

Presentation of Mrs. Johanna Kotschi, Head of the Division for “International Family Policy, Migration and Social Integration” at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Woman and Youth in Germany.

- Families are changing
 - 1996: German census revealed for the first time how many children lived in single-parent household
 - 1/5 children live in single-parent household
 - Current 72% women employment
 - High degree of flexibility need
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- Higher focus on quality of childcare
- Partnership bonus in the pipeline
- “Elterngeld+” → first year for child, supplement if parents do childcare in a spirit of partnership
- “Family working time” (“Familien- Arbeitszeit”)
- “Happiness comes itself if the family is in peace”
- Want to learn from other countries

Mrs. Anna Zaborská, Member of the European Parliament, Slovakia

- International year of families of UN
- COM, no legal basis for defining family/ private life
- Today we make policies for workers/ for citizens
- EU-Treaty does not include “father”, “mother”, “children” → will always be limited to employment/ social affairs
- Making poorest families our first equal/ policy partners → they all possess knowledge, should be included
- UN-item:
 - send conclusion of this symposium to Caritas office to the EU/UN ask for their inclusion
 - public meeting in EP on families

Prof. Dr. Beat Fux, has the chair for comparative social structure analysis at the department for Sociology of the University of Salzburg, Austria

- Erosion of marriage as a basis for families
- Children are no longer a pre-condition for families
- Family is a group/ an institution
- Female integration into work
- Southern Europe there is less frequent lone-parent household
- Polarization 1: child/ no child
 - movement from large families to smaller families
 - parents get children later → increasing risk of not getting children at all
 - Age for first child is much lower in Eastern countries → but they are more and more postponing the first birth
 - Most lone-parents in North-Western countries
- Polarization 2: marriage/ no-marriage (mostly Scandinavia)
 - Fertility/ Gender
 - Western Europe countries: clear preference for cash

- Eastern Europe countries: promoting maternity and paternity leave
- Liberal countries impose very high fees for child-care
- Exoneration of families via taxes mostly on Western countries
- Money-oriented policy: Western countries
- Service-oriented: Scandinavian countries
- Eastern countries: time dimension
- Southern countries: poor on all sides
- Highest satisfaction in Scandinavia
- High poverty rates in Eastern countries, also major material deprivation
- Big variations between lone-parents on poverty rate
- It's better to pay benefits → services are usable by individuals/ good infrastructure/ makes people happy

Presentation of Mrs. Johanna Kotschi, Head of the Division for “International Family Policy, Migration and Social Integration” at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Woman and Youth in Germany.

- Money – Time – Infrastructure
- Extensive review of family policies in Germany is unique in Europe
- Further development of “Elterngeld” (parent allowance)
- There has not been a study of the totality of effects of all benefits
- Evaluation process launched 2009
- Special support for poorer families is well accepted
- 81% of parents consider reconciliation as one of the most important tasks
- childcare is the most important factor of reconciliation
- lone-parents work more to get away from basic income support (Hartz IV)
- Health is an important factor → Housing situation, education of parents, satisfaction of parents
- Common activities essential: singing, reading, playing
- Benefits that are tailored to certain types of families are effective and have a good cost-benefit ratio

Mrs. Dr. Karin Jurczyk, director of research on Family and Family Policies at the German Youth Institute in Munich.

- Art. 66 GG underlines importance of marriage
 - high income – low income
 - non-family – family
 - Social justice vertical/ horizontal
- 2,8 Mio children ca. 15% poverty rate

- EU-27 average: 20,6%
 - No decrease of poverty despite good economic situation
 - Why and why these groups
 - Groups where children are particularly at risk of poverty
 - Jobless household → only 7% of all families
 - sole-parent 33% → 19% of all families
 - large families 19%
 - migrant background 18% → 29% of all families
 - young children 15%
 - German spending is higher than EU average but compared to GDP its not so high, especially when compared to Scandinavian countries
 - Big part of advantages is linked to marriage (“Ehegattensplitting”)
 - 4 objectives family policy
 - Demography
 - socio-political
 - institutional
 - emancipatory

Focus last years at demography and emancipatory
 - remarkable influence of economic on agenda
 - policy for poor families loses importance
 - Misfit with the concept of “free choice”
 - Misfit with demanding male-oriented organization of labour market
 - → conflicting objectives
- Case of single-mother families
- Dilemma of support: Those that need it most, use it least
 - Complexity of 150 benefits
 - No consistent definition of “child-needs”
 - lack of low-access institutions for services
 - Strong focus on behavioural prevention is not combined with structural poverty prevention
 - Family paper, Deutscher Verein 2013
 - Benefits should be linked to children and people who need care and not to marriage

Mr. Georg Kaesehagen-Schwehn, social worker, German Caritas Association

- Change between private/public responsibility
- Before responsibility of state was solely to intervene as soon as there is a problem
- → Now prevention!

Prof. Peter Abrahamson, associate professor of Sociology at University of Copenhagen

- We spend (in North-Western European Countries) approx. ¼ of our budget in welfare
- But differences in spending on families
- 1901: introduction of maternity leave but only four weeks
- ≠Germany social policies focusing mainly on workers
- Denmark social rights for all
- Childcare is of benefit for many people
- Fertility rate increased again, once DK introduced good services
- Impact on poverty
 - distribution of paid employment
 - distribution of social policies
 - Scandinavia does not have many working poor

Mrs. Sissel Garval, administrative officer at the National Board of Social Services, Denmark

- Lack of cross-sectoral intervention
- Resource-poor and -rich mothers together
- Document and follow up on intervention
- Objective: improve education and employment
- 80% of mothers start education/ start job → not enough results from control group
- needs based and continuous evaluation
- if you receive unemployment benefits you are not at risk of poverty in Denmark but if you receive social benefits you are
- official working time: 37h per week
- A lot of women work long past-time to gain enough
- People take short lunch breaks: 29 minutes officially
- Flexible working time in Denmark
- Husband has 6 weeks paternity leave
- Hungary: Working poor even if the whole household works

Mrs. Brigitte Alsberge, Secours catholique, France

- 1 child out of 5 is poor
- 1 out of 3 poor is a child
- Nothing for the first child

- Welfare is allocated for the second child without means-testing
- If you stay at home or work part-time to care for your children to get a little allowance but this is mainly benefitting the middle-class
- special allowance for children with a single-parent or without parents
- A lot of measures for your children but not a lot later
- A lot of people do not ask for the benefits they are entitled for. Why? Mainly it is too complex to ask for it
- Tax benefit mainly benefits to the 10% of families which are best off
- The poorest which do not pay taxes are out of that system
- 92% of children U3 of the 20% poorest families do not go into childcare but are kept by their parents
- Not to give money for the first child is in order to encourage fertility
- 1000 employees of Secours catholique, 60000 volunteers on a national level

Father Tadej Strehovec, teaching assistant of Moral theology and Applied ethics at the Faculty of theology, University Ljubljana, Slovenia

- 25% of all families are single-parent families
- Divorce rate almost tripled
- Marriage decreased
- 60% fertility
- Many parents presented themselves as single-parents in order to get more benefits
- 67% of family expenditures

Parental allowance

- 105 days maternity leave, 100%
- Many times people are under pressure not to take all the benefits/days they are entitled to
- If more than one child is in kindergarten, family pays only for one child
- Many benefits for education → but high return on investment since pupils/students have better results and finish studies quicker → less costly
- lack of preventive aspects, too much focus on curative