



**European Expert Group Meeting
“Confronting family poverty and social exclusion;
ensuring work-family balance;
advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity
in Europe”**

Convened as part of preparations for the
Twentieth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, 2014
(Cfr. Report of the Secretary-General ,
Preparations for and observance of the twentieth anniversary of the
International Year of the Family in 2014,
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Integration of family policies responses and shared responsibilities

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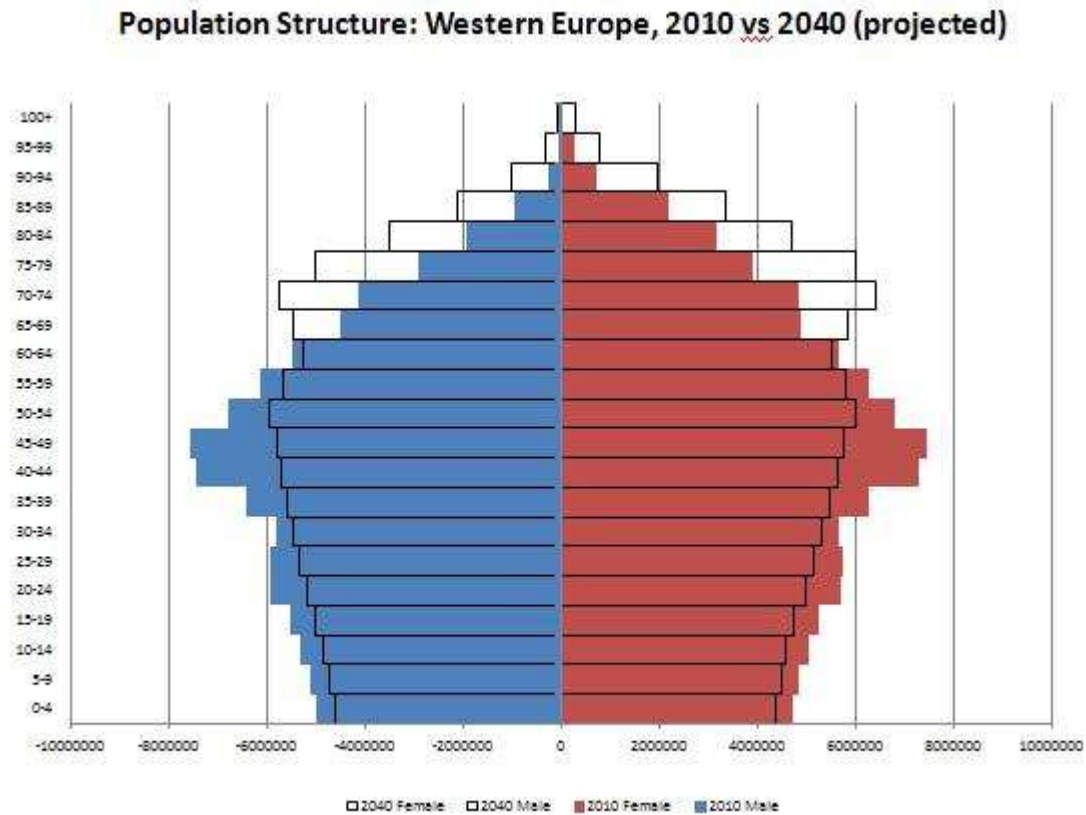
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Families are the cornerstone of society...

«Families are the cornerstone of society. They play a central economic role, creating economies of scale for people living together and as the source of home production. They are a crucial engine of solidarity, redistributing resources (cash, in-kind or time) among individuals, households and generations. They provide protection and insurance against hardship. Families offer identity, love, care and development to their members and form the core of many social networks.»

Fonte: OECD, Doing Better for Families, 2011

The Demographic Challenge



Note: "Western Europe" here defined as EU-15 plus UK, CH, NO and small adjacent islands and territories.

Source: US CENSUS IDB, available at <http://www.census.gov/population/international/data/idb/informationGateway.php>

The EU Approach

Family Policies are developed in the frame of the main European objectives:

«Sustainable growth,

a competitive social market economy aiming at full employment and social progress,

a high level of social protection of citizens and intergenerational solidarity.»

The EU Method

- Work-Life Balance
 - coordination in employment policies in and relevant areas of social policy, in particular by defining employment guidelines;
 - coordination and exchange of best practices in relevant areas of social policy, especially those linked to care services for children and dependent people.
- Respect for National Family Policies

Family Policies and the Welfare Regimes in Europe

Work-life Balance is convened as a means of achieving equality between women and men

Different welfare regimes

A more complex approach for better results

What makes the difference

Family Policy: shared ideas

- “Set of policies, amalgam of policies, range of concepts”: family policies seem to be characterized by a certain **complexity**;
- “Increase, support, strengthen”: family policies **promote** the choice to have a family;
- “**Children care**”: the presence of children in the family is of importance;
- “**Direct/indirect**”: family policies are polarized on two different approaches, between considering families and family relationships as an explicit object/subject of policies, or considering individuals as object of sectorial policies that help families, but only indirectly;
- “**Wellbeing**”: another complex concept relating to quality of life, happiness, personal fulfilment, freedom

Family Mainstreaming

«A process, a strategy and a tool. As a *process* it concerns identifying the implications for families of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes. It is also a *strategy* for making family concerns an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes. Moreover, it can be a *tool* for strengthening family-centered policies and programmes as part of an integrated and comprehensive approach to development planning.»

Family Mainstreaming can become useful in evaluating the impact of all the policies on families: therefore, it can become a tool not only for policy-makers, but also for NGOs and family associations.

Family Empowerment

Family Empowerment is a **method for social practice** and it is based on the *activation of the inner-potentialities of family relations*, by recognizing and promoting the symbolic, emotional, cognitive capabilities belonging not only to individuals, but also to the specific relation that individuals have.

Interventions based on Family Empowerment hold some characteristics:

- are directed to all the families;
- involve the family considered as a whole, as a subject;
- are focused on promoting the resources of the family (either inner or external resources);
- are aimed at enhancing the family as an active subject, main actor on the process, and not only an object and an addressee of intervention.

Towards integration

Family Policies should therefore:

- Be Cross-cutting [*Family Mainstreaming*]
- Be Explicit [*Directed to Family*]
- Be Coherent [*Part of a coherent set of policies*]
- Be Legitimate [*With a Budget!*]
- Promoting the wellbeing of families [*Not individuals*]
- Promoting the empowerment of families [*Building the subjectivity and participation of families*]

Guidelines for change

<i>Policies pursued at national and local level</i>		<i>Guidelines for the change</i>	
1. Implicit	Based on the consideration of individuals (gender, age, ethnicity...)	1. Explicit	Based on the intergenerational relationships as an issue of solidarity among generations
2. Indirect	Focused on social problems and on poverty eradication; family is considered functional to achieve those goals	2. Direct	Focused on the enhancement of the family relationships
3. On the individual	Focused on motherhood	3. On the family	Focused on the family as a whole, and on parenthood and intergenerational relationships
4. Expropriating	Focused on giving services that can replace the family care	4. Promotional	Focused on helping families to accomplish their tasks

Policy Recommendations

- *Consider work-family balance as policies for the wellbeing of families*
- *Strengthening the Family Mainstreaming Approach*
- *Build alliances for work-family balance at European, national and local level*
- *Strengthening the participation of families and family associations*
- *Recognize family care and family care work*
- *Ensure freedom of choice*

Thank you!

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