

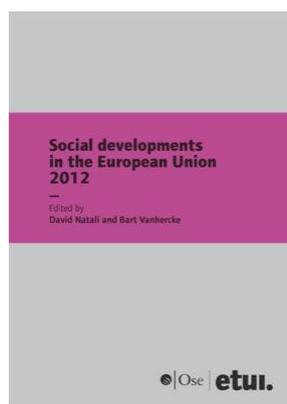
New publication

Social developments in the European Union

2012

Edited by

David Natali and Bart Vanhercke



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The year 2012 has seen new developments in the EU economic crisis and renewed attempts to address its main causes. The European institutions have intensified their programme of promoting austere economic governance, while the political and institutional debates on democratic legitimacy and the effectiveness of the EU have intensified. In such a context, the social dimension of Europe is clearly on the defensive with little progress towards more sustainable forms of growth. Almost undetected, however, the processes governing social policy in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy are slowly maturing and are being taken more seriously by key actors. This could prove to be highly consequential in future.

The 2012 edition of Social developments in the European Union finds evidence of pending problems and new challenges. Discussions focus on old tensions, including double dip recessions and persistent economic turmoil in many Member States. They also pose new questions about the current EU strategy, which has deepened divisions between Northern and Southern Europe and increased discontent among the general public. It has also done little to promote growth-friendly investment.

This volume focuses on alternative measures to save the EU. Taking as a starting point the growing criticism of budget austerity, especially from international organisations such as the ILO and IMF, contributors propose new strategies for tackling the crisis. At the top of the agenda is the need for the EU to allow Northern countries to adopt more growth-oriented budgetary policies to increase aggregate demand. This could help those countries hardest hit by recession to finally exit the crisis and in so doing save the European project.

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Table of contents

Foreword

The EU and the ever-changing crisis: what is the political cost of austerity?

David Natali and Bart Vanhercke

From financial to social and political risks in the Eurozone

Paul De Grauwe

The EU in 2012: political and institutional tensions

Alexander H. Trechsel and Claudius Wagemann

Beyond GDP: can we re-focus the debate?

Georg Feigl, Sven Hergovich and Miriam Rehm

Under the Radar? EU Social Policy in times of Austerity

Bart Vanhercke

Desperately seeking the European Employment Strategy in the new economic governance of the European Union

Ramón Peña-Casas

Education policy: comparing EU developments and national policies

Chiara Agostini and Gilberto Capano

A new European interventionism? The impact of the new European economic governance on wages and collective bargaining

Thorsten Schulten and Torsten Müller

Vicissitudes of the social case law of the Court of Justice in times of recession

Dalila Ghailani

Future prospects – Vademecum to address EU policy and political challenges

David Natali

Chronology 2012 – Key events in European social policy

Cécile Barbier