

# Contemporary Social Policy in the E.U.

*Professor John Wilton*

## Lecture 4

**The principles and concepts of E.U.  
social policy -harmonisation, mutual  
recognition, cohesion and convergence**

# Contemporary Social Policy in the E.U.

*Professor John Wilton*

## Lecture 4

### *Additional sources:*

Duina, F. and Raunio, T. (2007) 'The open method of co-ordination and national parliaments: further marginalization or new opportunities?', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 14:4, pp.489-506.

*Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.14, no.5, 2007. (Special issue: Mutual Recognition as a New Mode of Governance)

## ***Additional sources:***

- Hansen, M.P. and Triantafyllou, P. (2011) 'the Lisbon strategy and the alignment of economic and social concerns', in ***Journal of European Social Policy***, Vol. 21, no.3, July, pp.197-209.
- Van Vliet, O. and Koster, F. (2011) 'Europeanisation and the political economy of active labour market policies', in ***European Union Politics***, Vol.12, no.2, June, pp.217-240.
- Warleigh-Lack, A. and Drachenberg, R. (2011) 'Spillover in a soft policy era? Evidence from the Open Method of Co-ordination in education and training', in ***Journal of European Public Policy***, Vol.18, no 7, pp.999-1015.

***Additional sources:***

Copeland, P. and Haar, B. 'A toothless bite? The effectiveness of the European Employment Strategy as a governance tool', in *Journal of European Social Policy*, Vol. 23 no.1, Feb. 2013, pp.21-36.

Talani, L.S. *European Political Economy*. Political Science Perspectives, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2004 (Revised 2013), Ch.6 and Ch.7

# Contemporary Social Policy in the E.U.

## Lecture 4

- what are the defining characteristics and underlying principles categorising E.U. social policy?

### *CONTEXT*

- historical and theoretical frame

+

- underlying principles

# Contemporary Social Policy in the E.U.

## Lecture 4

- there is a parallel process of E.U. social integration accompanying developments in political and economic integration (spillover)
- What is the ‘politics’ of E.U. social integration?
- E.U. ‘single social areas’?
- A ‘europeanisation’ of social policy?

# Contemporary Social Policy in the E.U.

## Lecture 4

1. Harmonisation and convergence
2. Diversity and mutual recognition

# Contemporary Social Policy in the E.U

## Lecture 4

Harmonisation  
(CONCEPT)

Mutual Recognition  
(CONCEPT)



Convergence  
(PROCESS)



# Contemporary Social Policy in the E.U. Lecture 4

- Harmonisation made more urgent, but also more complex, by preparations for EMU – and aim and need to maintain principle of freedom of movement in enlarged E.U.

# Contemporary Social Policy in the E.U.

## Lecture 4

BUT, by Maastricht Treaty (1993) Social Charter stated account should be taken of “diverse forms of national practices, in particular in the field of contractual relations”

- stressed the need to maintain the competitiveness of the Community’s economy

# Contemporary Social Policy in the E.U.

## Lecture 4

Harmonisation of social policy not defined as, or suggested to mean, complete unification of social systems and social policy

- But acceptance of certain common principles and standards of social policy

# Contemporary Social Policy in the E.U.

## Lecture 4

- harmonisation seen as means of avoiding ‘welfare tourism’
  - and prevent national social policy becoming bargaining counter between member states
  - and avoid distortion of economic ‘competition’

# Contemporary Social Policy in the E.U.

## Lecture 4

Single European Act (1985) –  
convergence in fiscal and  
employment law

- improvement in infrastructures and standards of education and training
- for competitive Single European Market harmonisation of social policy necessary

# Contemporary Social Policy in the E.U.

## Lecture 4

- ***BUT*** Jacques Delors, as Head of the E.U. Commission, accepted various specific cultures, traditions and social policy models of member states meant harmonisation across all social policy areas impossible.
- *advocated COHERENCE/COHESION,*
- *Acceptance of diversity and 'MUTUAL RECOGNITION'*

# Contemporary Social Policy in the E.U.

## Lecture 4

COHESION = Member states 'encouraged' to co-operate and co-ordinate their efforts in order to bring about greater economic and social cohesion between the regions

# Contemporary Social Policy in the E.U.

## Lecture 4

‘Community Charter of the Fundamental  
Social Rights of Workers’, 1989

- harmonisation in context of freedom of movement – object of harmonising conditions of residence in all member states
- harmonise duration of paid leave from work
- harmonise safety conditions at workplace



# Contemporary Social Policy in the E.U.

## Lecture 4

‘Community Charter of the Fundamental  
Social Rights of Workers’, 1989

- allowed member states to continue with national differences in social protection systems
- Social Charter (Maastricht Treaty 1993) – no mention of harmonisation
  - respect for national specificity

# Contemporary Social Policy in the E.U.

## Lecture 4

‘Open Method of Co-ordination’ (OMC)

- formerly launched as an E.U. process at  
Lisbon E.U. Council of March 2000

- purpose was to spread legislative (and  
therefore, policy-making) ‘best practices’  
across E.U. Member States – primarily in areas  
where E.U. had no formal regulatory  
competence

# Contemporary Social Policy in the E.U.

## Lecture 4

- 2004 enlargement brought different issues and problems
- legacy of bureaucratic state collectivist systems
  - different institutional legacies
  - nature and character of revolutions
  - 1990s economic transformations
    - made harmonisation less likely

# Contemporary Social Policy in the E.U.

## Lecture 4

### SUMMARY:

1. Each enlargement made harmonisation less likely
2. ‘Deepening’ versus ‘widening’ – contradiction between economic and monetary union necessitating social policy convergence and expansion of E.U. complicating convergence

# Contemporary Social Policy in the E.U.

## Lecture 4

### SUMMARY:

3. Differences in social policy in each member state attributed to stage of social and economic development of each country – plus specific forms of national social policy resulting from social, economic, political and cultural traditions

# Contemporary Social Policy in the E.U.

## Lecture 4

### SUMMARY:

- NEVERTHELESS - can identify some over-arching principles of E.U. social policy
- based on 'core values' of social progress (i.e. high levels of employment, social protection, raising living standards and quality of life, promoting social cohesion and social justice)

# Contemporary Social Policy in the E.U.

## Lecture 4

### SUMMARY:

*‘Europeanisation’* of social policy?

- framework, of principles of social protection, social welfare, social justice, equality of opportunity
- A balance between convergence, diversity, mutual recognition

# Contemporary Social Policy in the E.U.

## Lecture 4

### SUMMARY:

*‘Europeanisation’* of social policy?

- A multi-level, varied approach model of E.U. social policy integration
- different social policy areas and at different social policy levels, different integrated approaches and degrees of integration employed