FAMILYPLATFORM

Critical Review of Research on Families and Family Policies in Europe

Conference Report
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4) Austrian Institute for Family Studies, University of Vienna
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6) Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon
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Introduction

The aim of this Critical Review Report is to describe and report on the international conference "*Families and Family Policies in Europe – A Critical Review*", which took place in Lisbon, at the Institute for Social Sciences (University of Lisbon), in May 2010. Organised by FAMILYPLATFORM consortium, the main objective of this 3-day conference was to carry out a critical review of existing research on families and family policies in Europe. Drawing on expert reviews of the state of the art, critical statements by stakeholders and policy makers, and debate on the major challenges for research and policies, the conference was organised with a view to providing a major forum for discussing and identifying the design of future family policies and research.

The conference thus represented a new experience and point of departure, by bringing together specialists from different work communities that normally do not engage intensely with each other's thoughts, understandings, agendas and work. The review set out in this volume therefore seeks to provide information on this forum on the basis of two perspectives: first, to allow for a detailed description of the structure and main contributions which took place; secondly, to bear witness to some of the interactions and processes of the conference, consisting of questions, arguments, and discussions, which were overall lively and mutually enriching, but also imparted diverse and sometimes contrasting perspectives on the wellbeing of families in European societies and the issues to be put on the agenda. The report will give readers an idea of the current cross-roads and patchwork of thoughts, doubts and agendas concerning families and family policies which exist across Europe.

As can be seen in the programme (see Annex 1), the conference was organised around the following types of sessions: plenary sessions with keynote speeches; working groups on the topics of the existential fields for which FAMILYPLATFORM produced state-of-the-art reports (eight in all, with 15 to 20 participants each); workshops on key issues for policy and family wellbeing (eight in all, with 15 to 20 participants each); plenary sessions where Rapporteurs summarised the debate/conclusions of the working groups; and a final plenary session with closing speeches and a presentation of the on-going foresight exercise. The working groups were structured around three main tasks: to discuss the major trends in family change and developments in research and policies for each Existential Field/Key Policy Issue; to understand if these trends/issues represent important challenges for the wellbeing of families in the future; to identify major gaps in research and to discuss possible new developments and future tasks for research and policy-making.

The report follows closely the structure of the conference. Participation and debate was important in all the sessions, but we will focus our attention mainly on the working groups (for a complete and detailed overview of the plenary sessions, see the videos which are online on the FAMILYPLATFORM website; the Microsoft

PowerPoint presentations by participants, the statements sent in by stakeholders and the reports by Rapporteurs are also accessible). In Part 1 of the report we present the working groups of the eight existential fields. For each working group we identify the participants and the organisation of the working group and the keynote speeches, then present an overall summary of the general discussion and contributions by stakeholders, and finally examine the major gaps and challenges for research and policy identified and debated within the working group. In Part 2 of the report we look at the working groups on key policy issues along the same above-mentioned lines. In Part 3, drawing on the discussions, statements, keynote speeches, and other documents examined in parts 1 and 2, we have carried out a first selection of some of the main topics and issues for the future research agenda.

Part I – Focus Group Sessions

(8 sessions in parallel)

Existential Field 1 - Family structures and family forms

Existential Field 2 - Development processes in the family

Existential Field 3 - State family policies

Existential Field 4 - Family, living environments and local policies

Existential Field 5 - Family management

Existential Field 6 - Social care and social services

Existential Field 7 - Social inequality and diversity of families

Existential Field 8 - Family, media, family education and participation

Existential Field 1 – *Family structures and family forms*

<u>Chair</u>:

Marina Rupp, University of Bamberg

<u>Keynote speakers/initial discussants</u>:

Andreas Motel-Klingebiel, German Centre of Gerontology, Berlin

Maks Benans, MODYS – University of Lyon

Anália Torres, ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon

Elisa Marchese, University of Bamberg

<u>Rapporteur</u>:

Elisa Marchese, University of Bamberg

<u>Stakeholders/other participants</u>:

Anneli Miettinen, Family Federation of Finland (Väestöliitto)

Rommel Mendes-Leite, University of Lyon

Hana Haskova, Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

Teresa Kapela, Związek Dużych Rodzin ''Trzy Plus''

Margaret O'Brien, University of East Anglia

Maria Hildingsson, FAFCE – Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe

Michela Costa, COFACE

Organisation of the workshop and keynote speeches

The session began with a presentation from Elisa Marchese (University of Bamberg) on the major trends of *Family structures and family forms* in Europe. She highlighted the main results by giving an empirical overview of the following topics: fertility and childbearing; the institution of the family; new and unusual family forms.

Following this presentation there was a brief discussion which was also enriched by presentations from the three keynote speeches:

Andreas Motel-Klingebiel emphasised some basic remarks concerning the report: the increasing diversity of families; the postponement of births and the decrease in fertility; the delay in marriage and the decrease in partnership-stability; the decrease in the rise of births out of the wedlock. He also considered the importance of adding other relevant aspects related to family life courses and dynamics: the household perspective; the parent-child-unit; spatial dimension and demographic trends. He concluded that information about current trends in more or less complex family and partnership patterns is important, but he stressed that what it is really needed is a discussion about goals of family policies as well as an agreement about such goals, a task for society as a whole and particularly for policy makers.

Anália Torres (ISCTE, University Institute of Lisbon) made a presentation on "*Family structure and Family forms in Europe – Trends and Policy Issues*". She gave a general overview of the main results of the European Social Survey according to a cluster analysis using indicators and data on main trends in family. She concluded that:

- The transformations of the family in Europe follow the same patterns but with differences in calendar and cultural variants. Each region has particular configurations and combinations between old and new patterns. It still makes sense, analytically, to differentiate between the northern and the southern European countries (although there are also internal differences within the groups of countries);

- The participation of women in the labour market is not a constraint to achieve a higher fertility rate. On the contrary, it seems that enhances it. If both partners of a couple are working there are more chances for them to make the decision of having children (when the interaction of other factors like social policies that benefit the articulation between work and family);

- Women want to invest in both family and work. However in the majority of the countries they have to pay a price for maintaining both investments (overload, not giving up a career, guilt feelings, unfulfilled identities); gender equality is continually at stake;

- Family is still the main sphere of personal investment for both men and women. What it is changing are the models of family life, the meanings and forms of investment in the family. The importance of feelings and emotional life is globally stressed - family, friends, leisure;

- Private matters are a subject of public and political agendas. Employment, Care and Gender Equality should be articulated.

Maks Banens (MODYS, Université de Lyon) focussed on a comparative analysis of same sex unions in West Europe. He addressed the following questions: how same sex union registration laws got adopted in Europe; what may be hidden behind the different legal status of registered unions; how to understand the huge differences in same sex union registration.

Main Discussions and Contributions from Stakeholders

The experts' presentations and the contributions by stakeholders underlined several key questions which were considered and discussed by the participants. The following topics summarise the main points of discussion within this focus group:

Comparatively pronounced dynamics in family forms and structures throughout recent decades…

"*General trend of a decline in institutionalised relationships*".

"*Move away from the previously dominant 'nuclear family model' towards a variety of different family forms*".

"*Simultaneous growth in other family forms where research is still scarce, particularly on new and rare family forms (foster Families, Multi-generational Households, Rainbow-Families, Commuter Families, Living-Apart-Together Families, Patchwork Families)*".

Overall postponement of family formation and childbirth for both men and women (individualisation? insecurity? wealth?). Generally downward trend in fertility rates though future developments remain dubious…

"*To what extent do young people today consider that they have the prerequisite conditions for having children? Do governments and local authorities make sufficient efforts to enable young people to have children regarding working and living conditions?*"

"*Fertility intentions still exceed fertility behaviour: possible diffusion of 'low-fertility ideal'; 'one-child trend'?*"

"*Is low fertility in Europe a problem? Is it good or not for Europe to have a high fertility rate?*"

"*Union dissolution is much less investigated than union formation (comparative research is scarce). Since partnership remains an important prerequisite for childbearing, dynamics of family formation (for example, increasing popularity of cohabitation, moving in and out of unions among young adults) and its consequences for fertility should receive more attention in the future*".

However…

"*Family is still the main sphere of personal investment for both men and women. What is changing are the models of family life; although there is an increasing diversity, the nuclear family (heterosexual) is still the predominant model*".

The transformations of the family in Europe follow the same patterns in spite of calendar differences and cultural variants; each region has its particular configurations and combinations between the old and the new…

"*It still makes sense, analytically, to differentiate the northern and the southern European countries; there is no equivocal European trend but significant cross-national variations*".

"'*De-standardisation' of the family is more pronounced in Scandinavia in comparison with a high standardisation which characterises the southern Europe*".

"*Falling (period-specific) fertility rates; most severe declines in Southern and Eastern Europe; modestly high fertility in Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon countries*".

"*Scandinavian countries have high fertility rates in comparison with many other European countries; at the same time Scandinavian countries also have high proportions of cohabitation, divorces and remarriage: is there a direct connection between the family formation patterns described above and the fertility rates?*"

Discussion on same sex families

"*Same sex union registration laws were not just the outcome of local political circumstances inside each country: transforming family values and practices seem to be one the main social forces behind same sex union legislation. They seem to be the necessary conditions, maybe even sufficient conditions, for obtaining same sex union recognition*".

"*Family attachment seems to relate to the recognition of same sex unions on both individual and political levels*".

Private matters of the past, such as having a job, having children, caring for them as well as for elderly relatives, are no longer private but a subject for public and political agendas…

"*Is fertility a personal issue or also a public issue? It's both since it implies with the welfare state and with the sustainability of social security system*".

"*We have to raise the sustainability of the social security system: immigrant labour force and women labour force; the question is that there is a political and economic interest for Europe that women work; but what about children and elderly care?*"

"*The participation of women in the labour market is not a constraint to achieving a higher fertility rate. Women want to invest in both fields of life, family and work. But in the majority of the countries, they have to pay a price for maintaining both investments*".

"*There are still some conflicts between care, work and gender equality which raise the pertinence of gender equality and work life balance policies; employment, care and equality need to be articulated in order to correspond to personal and family fulfillment …one without the other may result in unbalanced solutions with negative effects for the whole society and economy in general*".

Discussion on European fertility rates

"*Is low fertility in Europe a real problem?*"

"*Is low fertility in Europe a real problem or does low fertility also imply positive aspects and opportunities for societies (especially in a global context, where population growth probably will lead to more resource distribution conflicts in forthcoming decades); increasing fertility might create more problems; many countries cannot afford to have care facilities…there are economic consequences of high fertility rates such as the unemployment (there is a high unemployment rate among young people today, a problem created by high fertility in the 70's…)*".

"*Fertility is high where female activity is also higher… (e.g. services and childcare facilities combined with being active = higher fertility rates)*".

"*Difference between aspirations and number of children… the research has to go deeper into the reasons why people didn't have the number of children they wanted…what do families expect from governments and policies? What do they wish? We only have labour market and economy perspectives…it is important not to forget people's perspective*".

"*Major problem: defining the objectives of family policies: what is the principle according to which society should decide that having children, having families is good*

for society or not - this a very fundamental question - answers will probably differ from one country to another…"

Discussion on the inflexibility of labour market…

"*Family structures are being impacted by the inflexibility of labour market which is still based on the old time structures; there is a lot of debate on how it is necessary to change labour market policy in order to suit the new globalisation circumstances of the world but there is very little debate on how it needs to change to suit changes in family structures and society structures*".

Policies can make an effect…?

"*Policies and political changes have an effect on family changes: e.g. the case of fertility rates in Scandinavia countries where from the sixties onwards their fertility went down and later on, from the eighties onwards, it began to rise again; France combines different policies which also have effects on the rise in fertility; for example, the southern countries had a fall in fertility from the eighties on but in eastern countries the fall started in the nineties, which means that political changes had an impact on fertility and employment (e.g. private childcare)*".

"*The report suggests that future research should focus on new family forms as this is a dynamic area but further research might also confirm the trends of flattening divorce and remarriage rates, thereby strengthening the idea that the nuclear family model remains an aspiration for most people. With respect to the arguments and ideas put forward above regarding fertility and marriage aspirations we would hence call for continued research and exchanges on measures that aim to support marriage and thereby the family as the basic unit of society and the means (financial, services and time) that help families reconciling work and family life. Investing in these areas can be seen as an investment in our future by considering that families are the future of Europe*".

Discussion on methodology and data availability…

"*Cross-sectional demographic indicators tend to be well covered and easily available for most of the European countries. However, data on families and family forms is more difficult to obtain via existing statistical data sources. There are several problems. For example, definition of families/families with children/varies across European countries, and data collection on national level is not done systematically. Some forms of families (cohabiting unions, even if with children, same-sex couples, multigenerational families) may even not exist in statistical data sources, as is also acknowledged in the expert report*".

"*In order to study fertility and family formation dynamics more thoroughly, we need longitudinal data sets and different types of indicators. Cross-sectional indicators or*

survey data (if not retrospective) cannot cover many important dimensions of family formation. Life trajectories of the young are today more fragmentary in terms of educational histories, working life as well as family formation than they were few decades ago. Many of the indicators are not designed to capture the multitude of transitions during individual life, however, to understand factors related to this may be more important than to look at a simple transition from state A to B".

"The diversity and new forms of families also require new types of data collection; the study of households is very restrictive, with an implicit family definition behind; what's behind the composition of the household? It is very important for future research to look at family relations and to use and combine methods and methodologies in order to catch this diversity…"

"Researcher and policy makers should try to find trends but at same time diversity…There is a need for more qualitative research in order to catch the diversity in terms of small groups because they are raising other issues… family policy should be designed in terms of social groups; the policies are not the same for the different social groups…"

Methodological issues

The main methodological criticisms on data availability were focussed on:

- The lack of longitudinal data and of cohort data as well. There was agreement that this kind of data is crucially needed to get a deeper insight into the development of family forms, structures and development over time. Especially cross-national longitudinal data are very rare in Europe;

- At the same time, there is also a lack of information on decision-making processes related to family transitions as well as the relevance of family values and ideals for their behavior and attitudes. For both areas, particularly more qualitative data on a European level would be very significant to offer valuable clues to the general understanding of family decision-making processes;

- Another helpful insight could be gained if historical background and data were studied more intensively, though these types of data are very scarce in Europe.

The second main focus of the methodological discussion was the aggregation level of data:

- Most studies and research projects are based on aggregate national data instead of setting the focus on variations between the different social,

cultural and regional backgrounds of families within the different states. The discussants supposed that these different backgrounds should be considered more intensively, because it is very probable that these different social groups reveal different behavior and attitudes;

- Furthermore, there was a consensus in the discussion that political measures do have differential impacts on these different social groups. Therefore, especially cross-national comparisons would allow for a deeper insight on the differences and similarities of families with different social, cultural and regional backgrounds, which would also be very useful for further family policy decision making;

- Another critical point focussed the comparability of European family data bases with other important topical areas. Contemporary families are highly influenced by national labor market and educational systems. Nevertheless it is still very difficult to combine the data of these different areas. The analysis of families within the labor market and educational systems would be very important but is nearly impossible, especially on a cross-national European level.

Finally, besides the kind and aggregation level of family data, the (often scientifically and politically biased) perspective of national statistical offices and most of the data collection approaches as well as the interpretations of existing data were regarded as highly problematic:

- The official statistics of the European member states almost entirely concentrate on the unit of the household; taking the nuclear family model as the reference model. Hence, they often no longer cover the existing variety of family life and relationships, as family life is understood and lived differentially (e.g. family of choice, family as a network, etc.). National statistics and scientific studies should 'keep pace' with these changes. Thus,

  - data addressing relationships and kinship in more detail are needed, and

  - additionally, new concepts of family are to be considered as well;

- Furthermore, the official statistics of the European member states urgently need to be:

  - harmonised to a comparative level, so that variables and categories describing family life are the same in all states;

  - and to be extended in order to provide valid information on all family forms, this is: to document all kinds of family status, the number of

(consecutive) marriages, the (biological, social) status of children, and a common definition of new family forms, e.g. patchwork-families.

Major gaps and challenges for research

- While research on fertility development and its determinants is relatively abundant in Europe, micro-level research is still needed to understand not so much whether the couple will have children, but when they do so. Gender and Generations Survey (GGS) has been a major effort in this respect, but due to the expensive survey design used in the study, only a small group of European countries (15 in 2009) have participated in GGS so far;

- National and cross national trends of fertility rates are well known but there should be more research behind the EU average: on the differences between family forms, qualifications, social classes, regional data, etc.;

- Research on family policies and fertility has also tended to ignore housing and its costs, for example, although these affect markedly childbearing decisions;

- Significant research gaps, especially concerning new and rare family forms:

  - Family attachment seems to relate to the recognition of same sex unions on both the individual as well as on the political level; re-examination of the relationship between homosexuality and the family of origin in the different European areas;

  - How is the relationship between same sex unions and a) welfare systems and b) community solidarity;

  - New registration logistics are to be studied in more detail;

  - Need for differentiated and comparable data throughout Europe.

- We know little about the different reasons for fertility postponement and the magnitude of recuperation. Furthermore, we do not know the consequences of postponement. So there is a need to clarify the constraints for parenthood which young people perceive, and what these perceptions imply for political decision-making;

- Another very interesting research field could be the general relationship between values and behavior. Furthermore, very little known is also known about the reciprocal influence between institutions and attitudes. A better knowledge of the relationships between these areas is crucially needed for

the future implementation of political measures, as it is yet quite unclear how decision-making processes of couples and families are influenced and affected by other components (e.g. value or political systems);

- As mentioned above, the relationships between family members or kin are to be studied in a wider context in order to arrive at a new and more adequate picture of present family-reality. Thus, we have to widen the concept of family and to implement new concepts that go beyond the household and the nuclear family;

- A rather new and probably increasingly important theme is the possibility and acceptance of medical aid for fertility and its impact on family-life e.g. the postponement of childbearing or single-parenthood;

- Furthermore, demographic research should concentrate on the differential effects of rising migration and mobility as well as rising life expectancy in Europe as well. The existential field report pointed out that the standard nuclear family model is on the decline in Europe and is increasingly complemented by a large variety of other family forms. Further research should consider and include these developments and therefore pay more attention to the resources and networks of families in Europe. In this context also the change in intergenerational support is a very important topic to analyse;

- There is relatively little information on union formation and dissolution among the older population. So far, much of the research of family formation and family forms has focussed on young adults. Increasing life span and ageing of the populations means, however, that an increasing part of individual's adult life is spent in a family composed of two adults – if the union remains intact. Consequently, a growing proportion of families are elderly couples living by themselves, often but not always in close contact with their adult children;

- Research on partnership behaviour among the older population is important as couple relationships affect individual wellbeing and are a resource for informal care. Although cohabitation is still more common among the young, its role is increasing also among middle-aged or older people (particularly in countries which have been forerunners in cohabitation). Marriages, divorces and remarriages are part of the family life among older population as well.

Key policy issues

- The correlation between fertility rates and active family policies aiming to improve reconciliation of family life and work should be further investigated;

- Research on the impact of policies (or other societal factors) on fertility also requires sensitivity to gendered decisions, and the impact of gender relations on fertility;

- There has to be more research on the impact of family policies/different policy-strategies on the reality of family life and the chances of individual living arrangements;

- Future European family policies should focus on the freedom of choice, especially allowing parents to combine work and family life according to their preferences;

- There is a need for institutional child care of a high quality, on the one hand, and of societal acceptance and support for parents raising their children at home, on the other hand. In this context, family policies should also guarantee work-life-balance, provide more flexibility for families and be oriented towards a general reconciliation of care and work;

- Furthermore, there was a consensus in the discussion on the fact that policy measures have differential impacts on these different social groups. Therefore, especially cross-national comparisons would allow for a deeper insight into the differences and similarities of families with different social, cultural and regional backgrounds, which would also be very useful for further family policy decision making;

- Also the relationship between family policies and other policy spheres should be studied, and analysis of how family policies can better interact with economic and labor market policies should be developed. Nevertheless, states have to sensibly consider national differences before new strategies are adopted, because national differences still persist and therefore family policies may have differential impacts in different nation states;

- Moreover, in all European countries more gender equality is still needed. In order to achieve more equality between family forms, the institutional rights and constraints have to be reviewed and potentially modified;

- Furthermore, more explicit analysis of the real aims of family policies and their underlying ideologies is crucially needed. There was a lively discussion on which ideals of the family should be supported by family policies. Policies

should therefore be thought through and spelled out for various family forms;

- European citizens could be more involved in the decision-making process of family policies with a view to bringing their ideals and perspectives into the agreement on official policy aims;

- Finally, the participants considered that it would be important to introduce other indicators besides economic factors to evaluate the productivity of a society. Furthermore, the impacts of other policy fields need to be taken in account, because they may foil the aims of family policies (e.g. job-mobility). To make family life in Europe more comfortable and desirable, a helpful political instrument could be the introduction and implementation of 'family mainstreaming'.

Existential Field 2 – *Development processes in the family*

Chair:

Carmen Leccardi, University of Milan-Bicocca

Keynote speakers/initial discussants:

Carmen Leccardi, University of Milan-Bicocca

Karin Jurczyk, German Youth Institute, Munich

Rapporteur:

Miriam Perego, University of Milan-Bicocca

Stakeholders/other participants:

Barbara Stauber, University of Tübingen

Joan Stevens, World Movement of Mothers

João Mouta, Parents Forever Association

Julie de Bergeyck, World Movement of Mothers

Lea Pulkkinen, University of Jyväskylä

Michiel Matthes, Alliance for Childhood European Network Group

Olga Tóth, Institute of Sociology HAS

Zsuzsa Kormosné Debreceni, National Association of Large Families - Hungary

Organisation of the workshop and keynote speeches

Two presentations opened the debate in this focus group. The first presentation came from Carmen Leccardi (University of Milano-Bicocca) who was responsible, together with Miriam Perego, for the report concerning the general topic of Existential Field 2: "*Development processes in the family*"; the second one came from the keynote speaker Karin Jurczyk (German Youth Institute) and focussed mainly on the theme of doing family today.

Carmen Leccardi started her presentation by explaining that in their report the meaning of development, a concept she recognises to be ambiguous, is connected with two types of transformation within the family over the last few decades: changes in family forms (growing plurality ways of making a family) and changes in the identities of the several family members (young, adults, elderly), both being important to trace out developments in the trajectories of families in the new century. She also referred to the role of time and its impact on social changes and life course changes. Accordingly she highlighted four processes involved in these changes concerning European families:

- Individualisation ("*how people, both young, adults and elderly people, are required to define their decisions more and more as a kind of result of their own will; a social representation that shapes identities and in which different generations come in contact with each other*");

- Transformation in the relations between genders ("*one of the main points related to the transformations in the family; division of labour in the family is still not equal today; changes have different speeds; might be at the origin of uncertainty and conflicts within families*");

- The pluralisation of role models ("*connected with the growing importance of women's participation in the labour market but also with new men, with the younger generation having to cope with fatherhood and parenting*");

- The 'subjectivisation' of norms tied to the family and the couple ("*related to the fact that negotiation has a growing importance; we are facing new kind of norms within families which are very much related to different places, times and negotiations; the localisation of norms; the family did not lose norms but it has a new kind of normativity*").

Carmen Leccardi continued her presentation by identifying four main trends emerging out of the processes of development of the family:

- The prolonged presence of young people within their family of origin (the role played within it by: the negotiation- and affection-based family; the de-

standardisation of the life-course; yo-yo transitions; labour market instability; parent's home as a shelter to fragmented transitions to adulthood);

- Young people and parenthood - the new representations of parenthood among young people (new models of parenting, changing roles and obligations as regards gender): "*Differences as well as common aspects in the way women and men think about parenthood and motherhood; new identity tasks, conflicting tasks related to young mothers balancing work and family life; new models of fatherhood centred on the emotional level of the parent-child relation; tensions within the couple*";

- Conjugal instability, preconditions, modalities and its social and cultural consequences for family life, gender identities, and divorced fathers and mothers. "*'Crisis of marriage' versus 'crisis of institutional vision of marriage'; marriage more related to subject's experiences and negotiated norms; conjugal instability related to the ways in which negotiations are going on within the family…success related to a better balance of partnership, equality, recognition; differences in easy and hard divorces…poverty and economic problems for women…*";

- The new role of grandparents (new active biographical trajectories of grandparents and care support of younger family members) "*recent research on the new biographical paths of grandparents; elderly people are becoming more and more the subjects of their biographies and defining themselves in relation not only to the family but also to life projects; possible origin of conflict within the family in a context of economic crisis and social uncertainty; grandparents feel a lot of uncertainty: biographical, existential and social through their relations with children and grandchildren; what happens to the grandparents? Grandparents have to cope with this received uncertainty and have to transform it into a positive relation with family members…*"

Following Carmen Leccardi's presentation, Karin Jurczyk started her presentation on "*Doing family – a new approach to understand family and its developments*". Her proposal focussed on the discussion on "*what does doing family mean?*" The starting point of Karin Jurczyk is that there is a need for new approaches and theoretical discussions:

- The state of the art concerning the report on the Developmental processes in the family – (Existential Field 2) "*presents a lot of empirical details but a lack of concepts related to social changes and what is going on in contemporary families*";

- There is a "*need to frame contemporary families within the trends of late modernity and eroding traditions of so called normal biographies*"; "*biographical regimes*"; "*erosion of the structural contexts and the trend of individualisation*";

The main point Karin Jurczyk brought into the discussion was that "*Family is more than ever a practice which has to be done permanently all over the life-course; family is no nature, no given resource and no fixed institutional frame of private life and individual biography*".

Concerning the *Report on Developmental Processes in the Family*, Karin Jurczyk considered that: "*there is a wide spread confusion on what is family development, if we want to go further in research we have to clarify: what is included in the concept of family developmental processes? (…) there are different concepts…all dealing with developments but on very different aspects; family transition focuses on certain stages of family life, they are no longer necessarily framed by the so called rites de passage; the family cycle clearly aims to shape distinct periods within family life which only happen once (this is the old concept which is no longer adequate); the family life-course is a chronological concept of changing families within time, along age (that is another understanding); this differs from individual life-course within the family as well as from the focus of the specific changes of types of family during the life-course (this is different types of families); the understanding of the dynamics of family change through societal and historical changes: this may all be included in the concept of family development*".

Commenting the four major trends identified by Carmen Leccardi, Karin Jurczyk stressed once more her proposal: a better understanding of those trends within contemporary society requires a radical turn to theories of 'praxeology'. In her view, there is a need to know how people do their families; how they live their concrete daily life; not so much what are their values and attitudes but what are their practices. According to Karin Jurczyk, there is a lack of knowledge on what are the dimensions of the daily life, on what is really going on with the practices: "*we have to understand how people do family…*", by differentiating unreflected practice/routine and focusing on the intentional action "*the challenge is that we have to understand the daily and biographical shaping of a common life as a family, as a whole, as a group, not only the daily life of a woman, of a man and of a child, but the integration of these different perspectives in family life (…) the integration of the individual is not only the addition of different actors; there are conflicts between solidarities, intentions, demands, there are tensions between the individual 'me' and the 'us' (…) they are not at the same level, there is gender and generations (…) this biography is interlinked with shared life context, into family as a group (…) family is an actor in itself*". For Karin Jurczyk, "*another aspect which is neglected, for example, is a bodily dimension of family, family is also physical…*"

Summarising Jurczyk's perspective, 'doing family' today must be understood essentially not so much in the light of theoretical approaches but on the basis of a new 'praxeology' which sees as protagonists the individual components of the family (children, mothers and fathers, siblings, grandparents, neighbours and so on) and the relations of solidarity/conflict that they construct on a daily basis through reciprocal interaction. From the point of view of this analytical approach there are numerous phenomena involved: bodily, emotional, cognitive, media-related, social, temporal and spatial. Family policies, in order to be effective, must in their turn come to grips with this multiplicity.

While commenting the four major trends identified by Carmen Leccardi, Karin Jurczyk also identified some research gaps and challenges for further research (see research gaps). She proposed a better understanding of the "huge gap" that still exists between attitudes and practices regarding gender roles (not only concerning men's roles but also with regard to mothers' ambivalence when they ask for more participation of men in family life while also tending to restrict that participation). She also found ambivalences and contradictions in the developments of welfare regimes and stated, as an example, the case of Germany where, according to her, some laws push families towards modern forms of family while, at same time, relying on traditional forms of families. On the other hand, she considered that the generational perspective of the family has been underestimated and that researchers speak a lot about couples but neglect the role of children as active actors; there is also the double role of elderly who are both care receivers and caregivers; she also pointed out the importance of studying family as a network, an extended perspective of the family, taking into consideration new developments of the life course, specially what comes out of the divorce (patchwork families), as well as spatial dimension of the family in respect to 'multilocality' (as a cause of divorce but also of professional mobility); for Karin Jurczyk it is important to study the impact of multilocality in families due to the fact that multilocality can create virtual families and "*there is a limit for possible virtuality in family life…*"; finally she emphasised the lack of knowledge on the concrete procedures of negotiating and practicing partnership and parenthood as well as on she what she considers to be a big research gap: no research on the interaction process of becoming a parent ("*we have studies about men, women's wishes, child's wishes, but no research on how to become a parent…*")

These two experts introduced several key questions which the group discussed. The following paragraphs summarise this discussion.

Main Discussions and Contributions from Stakeholders

Following the two presentations there was an open debate. Among the comments and critical ideas put forward by the participants, it became evident that Karin Jurczyk's proposal of conceptualising the family as an actor itself, not limited to the experience of couples, and committed to the idea of an interactional network with emotional and bodily (physical) dimensions, was very much appreciated by all the participants in this focus group.

There was an agreement that these different dimensions of interaction, reinforced by Karin's presentation, tend to be completed forgotten in European studies; the proposal of turning to 'praxeology' was also very well received and considered as a pertinent approach to catch diversity as well as an important basis for grounded policies (and as an alternative to structural policies constructed on the basis of generality).

The following topics summarise the main key issues that were discussed within this focus group:

What does "doing family mean"? What does it imply from the point of view of methodology and theoretical approaches?

"First of all, this means focusing on relations between people within the family and on their practices in everyday life. In this respect, we have to be aware that family is not a given, but is a lively dimension, in constant change, which is done and re-done constantly." In this process, as it has been underlined by Jurczyk, an important role is played by the body and by bodily and emotional ties that build interactions among family members within the family and in relation to society.

"This perspective of 'Doing family' sheds light on the pluralisation of familial developmental processes; if we are able to raise adequate theoretical questions in investigating families, then we are also able to propose a 'praxeology' in this respect. This means being able to understand daily practices in 'doing family' and in constructing interactions between family members".

"The importance of studying family as a whole but also as an interaction requires to go further in theoretical tools in order to get good empirical data; that also implies going beyond the fact that some fields of sociology are sectored: sociology of the family, of youth, of education; the need to look at reality with an interaction perspective covering the process as a whole from the beginning: sociology usually studies the fixed time or a fixed moment and neglects how things interact and how people in the family negotiate in the long time..."

"Families should be looked at as subjects and not only as objects".

"The concept of 'action in the plural sense' - the role of collective actors".

"Pick up the bodily and emotional dimensions in the life of the family; families are constructed through interactions and also through body and emotional interaction and this means also that interactions have to deal with the family as a whole, this means that inside the family we have different generations, different genders, we have children, adults and elderly, and all these subjects intervene through their interactions and also through their bodily and emotional interactions".

"Talking about family implies looking at everyday life and how the practices in everyday life can shape the family, do the family".

"In order to understand the role of everyday life and every day practices in doing the family we have to start from the theory, from theoretical questions; however in family platform project we had to start from the results of research and not from theory".

The centrality of the phenomenon of negotiation within the family: between partners, between parents and children, between grandparents and grandchildren and so on.

"Is it possible in this regard to affirm that the family today is characterised by fully-fledged models of negotiation (in correspondence to the various components of the family)? If so, what is the character of these and in what way are they constructed? What effects do they produce on the life of the family and on the wellbeing of families? From this point of view what role is played by the processes of individualisation brought to light in the introductory presentations?"

"How can negotiations harmonise the level of individualistic goals, the couples' goals and how do the macro social circumstances affect these decisions, how to match these three levels? How can we carry out empirical research on this topic?"

"We must take into consideration the role of education in the developmental processes of the family, e.g. the importance of education for negotiating, how to solve problems, how to communicate with children… negotiation of conflicts between the older generations who stay longer in the labour market and the needs of family of having them at home caring for children".

"Conflict between solidarity and autonomy: one of the crucial dimensions of the decision-making process".

Families with a large number of children and the importance of their educational role in the current panorama of transformations in the family.

"What messages do these traditional forms of family offer to the social world today at a time in which the general tendency is to limit the number of children per family?

And in what way can welfare policies take this type of family into consideration in a concrete way?"

The role of welfare policies…

The theme of welfare policies was central to the debate from various points of view. In the first place in relation to the ways in which these policies intervene to shape family life and the relations between the various components in the family (for example, between parents and children and their forms of living together. In this regard, attention was drawn to the case of welfare policy in Finland, capable of facilitating to a significant degree the autonomy of young people vis-à-vis their family of origin). More generally, the question was raised as to how family policies today might be able to take account of the plurality and variety of the ways of 'doing a family'. An extensive discussion also took place on the theme of the perverse and unwanted effects of policies on the life of the family and its development.

"A big challenge for family policy is to construct family policy that covers diversity; all follow one certain model of family either implicitly or explicitly; is it necessary that family policy always focuses on one certain model or is diversity and plurality a model as such which can be supported by politics? How can that work?"

"Unpaid work of women and family carers (e.g. handicapped children) is an important value for society and GDP (states economise a lot) but non active in statistics – fundamental for families lives; poverty in family because most of the children are living in the families; disabled children, family carers are often not paid; also to be researched: their conditions of life and care".

"Family care should be included in GDP".

Possible relationship between scientific experts engaged in the study of the family and stakeholders (as well as policy makers).

"What is the nature of this relationship today and how could it be improved? How might it contribute to the support of more vulnerable families or the rights of children within the family? More generally, how can this relationship contribute not only to throwing light on questions that are central to the wellbeing of families but also to facilitating the development of appropriate public policies?"

"Main points regarding this relation between researchers and stakeholders is the awareness by both the researchers and the NGOs that we deal with representations of reality and if we find there are common grounds for these representations then a common voice can also be found. For example, children's rights and the quality of childhood – focusing on children as subjects and not only as minors…or subject to a hierarchical condition…"

Children's rights and wellbeing…

The theme of the rights of children proved central to the discussion and it was analysed from various points of view. In particular, attention was drawn to the issue of the consequences of divorce on the life of young children; the importance of the regularity of contact over time and of interaction between separated fathers and mothers and their children was stated as an essential element for the wellbeing both of children and their parents. More generally, emphasis was placed on the importance of maintaining a high level of awareness about the effects of the developmental processes of the family on the wellbeing of children. Moreover, in more concrete terms, attention was drawn to the importance of maintaining the wellbeing of children through appropriate policies, in particular when exceptionally adverse events affect the life of the family as a whole; "*we should start focusing on children as subjects and equals in the family and not just as minors*".

The need to look at divorce as a start of a new form of family…

"*From the late sixties until now divorce has increased significantly so a lot of people are sons or daughters of divorced parents and we don't yet know what kind of family life-courses histories they have experienced; maybe these changes and the instability of family and marriage will take us to new forms of family in the present; we still have too much research centred on women's problems and less on fathers; we also have to look at the family from the perspective of men…the role of fathers after divorce…*"

The gap between principles and practices in respect of family life.

Regarding the question of the processes of change in the family, various features were underlined. In the first place, the gap between norms and practices in family life (in this regard attention was drawn to the fact that change in practices is often more rapid than that of cultures/norms, which are slow to change); secondly, as pointed out in the initial presentations, the growth in the importance of processes of individualisation within the family; thirdly, the importance of the recognition of diversity as the basis of family life today; and fourthly, new conflicts within the family between the (exercise of) solidarity and (the need for) autonomy.

Same sex families can be a starting point for a new way of looking at the family…

"*Due to the fact that there seem to be no gender differences it is interesting to get to know better the way they manage their individual perspectives of family life…*"; "*What does it mean to be a gay or a lesbian father in relation to the children's future and adulthood…*"

The importance of conducting empirical research of a comparative kind in relation to the various European countries.

In the first place, empirical research of this type is important in order to understand in a detailed way what lies at the basis of the differences between the European countries in so far as the family is concerned (the timing of family life, the ways of 'doing family', the relationship between parents and children, the balance between family, work and personal life – in connection with the reality of the labour market and welfare policies). Great interest was also expressed for a comparative analysis of the manner in which these differences impact on the ways in which family choices (and individual choices within the family) are elaborated and negotiated.

On the Differences of opinion…

"*We are facing families and not family; facing different ways of conceiving families*".

"*There are many different ways of providing good quality of life - we must avoid speaking in normative statements - we have to understand that in our contemporary societies talking about family means talking about diversity, different forms of people cohabiting; we have to agree that there are many different ways of attaining good ways of quality of life*".

Methodological issues

On a more general level, there is a need of longitudinal research of a qualitative kind on European families and their transformations ('to go beyond the large amount of available data'); need for more life-course studies;

It is important to focus on the family as a network which exists beyond the couple and also beyond divorce; on the spatial dimension of families which is becoming more multi-localised (not only due the parents' separation but also because of professional mobility).

Major gaps and challenges for research

- The lack of knowledge on the concrete procedures of negotiating and the practices of partnership and parenthood;

- There is a big research gap concerning the interactions of becoming a parent – we have studies about men, women, child wishes, but no research on the interactions between parents and the process of how to deal with becoming a parent;

- There is a lack of studies on same sex families;

- More research on the huge gap that still exists between attitudes and practices concerning gender roles; not only for men but also on women/mothers who tend to restrict men's participation in family life; important to look at these ambivalences;

- Also the bodily and emotional dimensions of the family have to be taken into consideration by research; more specifically, attention should be drawn to the physical dimension of motherhood;

- An effort must be made in order to promote greater understanding of new forms of families today, including the relation between children and parents. We refer here, for example, to 'patchwork' families (after divorce), to migrant couples and parenthood, or to same-sex couples;

- To focus on children who are experiencing or have already experienced critical events both in new and traditional families (for example, in same-sex couples) and understand what are the risks for children in high-conflict family situations, in order to develop sensitive policies to support them;

- Need for research on how education to family life, marriage, conflict handling, etc., can contribute to changes in the attitudes of young adults towards family values;

- The generational perspective has been underestimated; "*we speak a lot about couples but neglect the role of children as actives actors, as equals within families and not just minors…*";

- Need for further research on the importance of mutual care between generational and gender groups;

- Need for cross-national comparisons on the role of grandparents in childcare;

- Summarising, there is a main research gap concerning the linkages between daily life and developments of family, the daily and biographical processes of doing family as an interaction; this type of research in needed in order to do facilitate adequate family policies.

Key policy issues

- Policies should match the very different concrete needs of families, in order to support them in particular ways;

- Family policies should cover diversity and plurality;

- Policies should be based on research results;

- Policies should be able to consider not only the development of children in relation to their growth but in relation to the developments in family life (taking into consideration the parents as well as the siblings);

- It is important to carry out research on unexpected/non-intentional effects/consequences of policies on families and family members; research on the ambivalences and also on the contradictions of welfare state policies;

- More developments in policies in order to support children in critical life transitions and events such as their parents' divorce.

Existential Field 3 – *State family policies*

Chair:

Olaf Kapella, University of Vienna

Keynote speakers/initial discussants:

Kathrin Linz, Institute of Social Work and Social Education, Frankfurt

Jorma Sipilä, University of Tampere

Rapporteur:

Sonja Blum, University of Münster

Stakeholders/other participants:

Daniel Erler, Familienservice GmbH

Fred Deven, Kenniscentrum WVG - Dept. of WellBeing, Public Health & Family

Ghislaine Julemont, Centre d'Action Laïque - Belgium

Helena Hiila, The Family Federation of Finland

Jonas Himmelstrand, HARO, Sweden

Josef Jelínek, Obcanske sdruzeni ONZ

Katerina Cadyova, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic

Luk De Smet, Gezinsbond - Belgium

Magdalena Kocik, University of Warsaw - Polish Society for Social Policy

Renata Kaczmarska, United Nations

Sven Iversen, Arbeitsgemeinschaft der deutschen Familienorganisationen (AGF) e.V.

Tomasz Elbanowski, Ombudsman for Parents Rights Association - Poland

William Lay, COFACE

Yves Roland-Gosselin, CNAFC

Organisation of the workshop and keynote speeches

Sonja Blum (University of Münster) opened the focus group session with a presentation on the major results of the Existential Field report on *State family policies* which she authored together with Cristiane Rille-Pfeiffer (University of Vienna). According to Sonja Blum, state family policies in Europe have gained tremendous importance over the last years due to some major challenges European society are facing such as ageing, growing diversity of families and reconciliation of work and family life. These challenges have made family policy as one of the few expansionary welfare areas. However, in comparison with other social policy fields' family policy is characterised by a small degree of institutionalisation even though it is cross cutting with other policies related to employment, education, housing and urban development that impact on families.

Family policies across EU countries are characterised by a huge diversity. Sonja Blum focussed on major trends of family policy in Europe regarding: regulatory frameworks; leave policies; care services; and cash and tax benefits. Her approach was based on a geographical typology of family policies which she adopted as a temporary solution (Nordic, Continental, Anglo-American, Mediterranean and Post-Socialist countries); on the family policy database of the Council of Europe; on the information made available by the annual review of the International Network on Leave Policy and Research; as well as on the data resulting from a small questionnaire her work team send to welfare state researchers in all EU 27 countries.

Regarding the analysis and comparisons of family policy trends in Europe she concluded that regulatory frameworks are not usually included in family policy research and that there are significant differences between countries, in particular between Nordic countries (where together with Anglo-American countries there is less family policy explicitness) and Mediterranean and Post-Socialists countries where there is more explicitness (for example, state family protection is usually written in constitutional law). On the other hand there is also a great variety in the legal recognition of family diversity, with the Nordic countries being particularly advanced and putting same sex marriages on a pair with heterosexual marriage, while the Mediterranean and Post Socialist countries seem to lag behind. She also found that there is a trend of growing institutionalisation of family policies, even though only 10 of the 27 EU countries had designated family ministries in 2009.

Leave policies are one of the best investigated family policy areas. There is huge variation in the structure, length and payments; there is a common trend to introduce short paternity leave in addition to short health oriented maternity leaves; as well as to introduce non transferable periods for each parent within parental leaves (partners' months or daddy months) on the basis of a more equal share of work and family balance between both parents.

Regarding care services Sonja Blum considered that there are rich comparisons on childcare services. However care services for other persons such as the elderly and disabled persons are much less focussed by policies as well as by researchers, particularly with regard to reconciliation policies. She pointed out three major trends in this area: legal entitlements for childcare are increasingly introduced; the last pre-school year is being compulsory or free of charge; though expansionary efforts vary (between strong, moderate and virtually non-existent), childcare has been one of the crucial family policy issues in the EU during the last years.

Cash benefits are well studied but there is less information on cash benefits per family type than expenditure-based studies; also data on tax benefits are poor; all European countries pay child allowances but some do it on a universal basis while others target it to income, age or number of children.

In conclusion, Sonja Blum identified some European trends in terms of either re-familialisation or de-familialisation: while family policy in Nordic countries seems to keep the sense of re-familialisation and Mediterranean keep their orientation toward de-familialisation, conservative and Anglo-American countries both show changes towards de-familialisation while Post-Socialist countries are very heterogeneous, between de-familialisation and re-familialisation.

"*Why did some countries manage to modernise their family policies and adapt them to current challenges while others seem not able or not willing to do so if we look comparatively?*" To understand and explain this Sonja Blum proposes a perspective in terms of the analysis of the 'policy cycle': problem definition, agenda setting, policy formation, policy implementation, evaluation and termination.

Sonja Blum concluded by considering that another important challenge for research will be the study of the impact of the economic crisis in terms of consequences for European family policies. She ended by pointing out some major research gaps identified by the existential field 3 report which she authored together with Christiane Rille-Pfeiffer (see major gaps and challenges for research).

A second presentation came from Kathrin Linz (Institute of Social Work and Social Education, Frankfurt) titled as "*Hurdles to overcome in comparative research on family policy*", therefore focusing on what she experienced as obstacles while doing comparative research on family policy in Europe. In her presentation she referred to two comparative studies both conducted in 2009: one on the "*reporting on policies for families in the EU member states*"; the other one on *"policies for families in times of the economic crisis – reactions of the EU member states*".

Family support systems are being shaped and developed independently in each country. The development of national policy measures are shaped in a context of differences in cultural conceptions, socio-political targets, welfare state configurations and financing possibilities. Therefore Kathrin Linz considers that when

doing cross-national research on family policies in European countries "*we need to take into account the different traditions of dealing with policies for the wellbeing of families as well as the development of institutions in this field*", namely the political structures dealing with families in different states.

Is the overall support system for families stronger in countries where family policy is explicit and where there is a designated ministry for family affairs? "*In some member states it was not easy to find the right person to talk to because by the time we conducted the study there were only nine ministries in the member states who had family in their title*".

When conducting comparative studies on family policy "*we need to know more about how family policy is culturally and institutionally embedded in each country*". Why is the word "family" part of the ministry name in some countries? How to explain differences in the development of explicit family policies in some member states?

Kathrin Linz mentioned a study (conducted by Franz Rothenbacher – University of Mannheim) where it was shown that there is a strong connection between state expenditure on families, the standing on family policy in society and the development of institutions. The study also concluded that the development of explicit family policies is to be expected to a higher degree in countries where catholic values correlate with high socio-economic development; in countries where catholic values correlate with weak socio-economic performance there is often an effect on the development of institutional structures in family policy.

According to Kathrin Linz, when comparing major trends of current debates on family policies in European countries it seems that changes in policies are more and more focussed on confronting the demographic challenges, for example the expansion of childcare facilities in Germany. Policy makers and stakeholders are also worried about the impact of financial cuts on families. What impact has the economic crisis on national family policy measures in Europe? Research results showed that the impact of the economic crisis in public finances was particularly important concerning measures and programs for families, which means that funding strongly shapes policies for families. However, responses to the economic crisis varied widely. There are also contradictions among the changes introduced by countries, with some changes resulting in an expansion of the level of support for families, and others going into the direction of reduction. Kathrin Linz considered that changes in family policy as a response to the economic crisis is a fertile ground for further research and she also stated that "*we should look also at changes in the resources in family policy over time*".

As national family policies are subject to constant change it is therefore important to understand which changes have a positive and which changes have a negative

impact on families. More longitudinal comparative research would be useful to increase knowledge on developments and outcomes of family orientated policies. Especially in times of economic crisis it is important to conduct longitudinal studies which provide information on the changes on the state support systems for families over time.

A third presentation came from Jorma Sipilä (University of Tampere), and focussed on cash for care: "*Cash for childcare: an exquisitely debated subject* " which he recognised to be a small detail in the whole process of family policy; however, he pointed to it as an interesting detail because it is related to emotions as well as being a controversial subject: "*most of the social researchers as well as policy makers, especially those involved in the economic field, either have not been interested in this topic or are against it*".

The major question is: "*should the state pay parents for taking care of their children at home?*" According to Jorma Sipilä, there are two alternative ways: one is the American one where parents are given cash to purchase care as they wish (parents may pay for care or provide care themselves); the other alternative is the Nordic one which is "*about giving cash instead of day care*", meaning that if parents do not use subsidised day care they are allowed to get cash for care. Jorma Sipilä focussed on this latter measure which is more common among Nordic countries where there has been a broader use of day care and high expenditure on families. However there is no mainstream model in Scandinavia but a variety of different principles, particularly at local level.

Jorma Sipilä named a set of arguments in favour and against these extensively debated home care allowances. Among the arguments which are against, the following were emphasised: the risk of career development for women; poverty and female unemployment (the state is spending money to reduce female unemployment while every political program demands the opposite); the extra costs it represents for the state; the increasing marginalisation among mothers as well as more risks for children; it is also seen as an advantage for mothers but not for children; it is particularly poor and under educated parents who prefer this cash care solution; it might be problematic for immigrant children who will be raised separately from other children; there is no guarantee of quality because the state cannot intervene and examine what is going there; it creates problems in terms of gender equality in respect to formal and informal work.

Concerning the arguments in favour, Jorma Sipilä named the following: the benefit allows people to protest against the lack of reconciliation between work and family life (very popular among young people), the benefit increases family time (also a very popular argument reflecting the growing value of maternal care and children – re-familialisation perspective). In fact, about 90 per cent of people in Finland have used cash for care for some period. From the perspective of research explanations

are related to the following: insecurity in the transition to the labour market; family care capital in times where unemployment rises; parents can less and less afford to stay at home without benefits; privatisation and non formalisation of care as a cause of economic crisis; neoliberals' emphasis on individual choice; motherhood and gender differences are somehow glorified by the entertainment industry; the existence of this kind of benefits legitimises the use of it (social policy benefits function as normative recommendations, intensifying the social obligation to make time for care); advantages of day care and family care according to medicine and child psychiatry.

In conclusion, considering the importance this benefit still has for families and taking into account the current controversial debate around home care allowances, Jorma Sipilä proposed some recommendations in order to improve the benefit. One is that parents should not be exclusively at home i.e. the benefit should not promote exclusion from the labour market but should motivate the combination between part-time work and part-time childcare; parents should not be particularly encouraged to reject the labour market; the benefit should be shared between parents as care leaves also tend to be shared; the introduction of father's quotas in cash for care would also improve gender equality.

Therefore one main point stressed by Jorma Sipilä was that the right to the cash benefit should never exclude the right to day care as happens today in Finland (though not in Norway); children's participation in group activities should be a condition for cash benefit in order to prevent children to grow up in closed families.

A final presentation came from Jonas Himmelstrand (HARO, Sweden) who focussed on Swedish family policies with a presentation titled "*Are the Swedish state family policies delivering?*" His main point was to challenge the perfect image Sweden usually has regarding family policy, i.e. as having the best state welfare model in international benchmarking. According to Jonas Himmelstrand, there is currently in Sweden a culture and a political commitment which looks at state professional childcare as the most suitable one regarding the child's development while family care is seeing as not being the most proper one. Gender equality is strongly discussed and a core issue in the debates on childcare.

Overall Sweden is known for having great statistics in respect to low infant mortality, very high life expectancy, relatively high birth rate, low child poverty, high spending on education, equality and gender equality and the best parental leave. However, Jonas Himmelstrand argues that quality must be also balanced with quantity: "*are we actually producing a next generation which has the psychological maturity and ability to handle stress that will manage the challenges of future life?*"

Sweden is known as having one of the best parental leave schemes. However, one of the main ideas Jonas Himmelstrand wanted to stress is that after the 16 months of

well paid parental leave (13 months at 80 per cent of salary plus another 3 months at a lower level) the 'door closes'. On the other hand, he also pointed out that cash for care depends on municipalities, only one third is providing it; on the other hand, the high Swedish tax system is designed for dual-earner households; family policy emphasises a work policy saying that "*everybody should work after parental leave*"; parental leave is expected to be split in equal shares between men and women. Therefore the overall family policy model is becoming "*children in day care and parents in work life*".

In relation to this family policy model regarding childcare, Jonas Himmelstrand brought up some "*uncomfortable statistics*", namely: the severe decrease in psychological health among youth; the very high rates of sick leave among women; day care staff at the top of the sick leave statistics; rapidly decreasing quality in Swedish schools; plummeting educational results in Swedish schools; severe discipline problems in Swedish classrooms; deteriorating parental abilities, even in the middle classes; a highly segregated labour market. Among the main possible causes based on current knowledge, Jonas Himmelstrand reinforced the negative impact of early separation between children and parents as well as of early exposure of children to large groups of peers.

Finally Jonas Himmelstrand concluded that "*Swedish state family policies are not emotionally sustainable and thus not sustainable in either health, psychological maturation or learning (…) Swedish State family policies may not even be democratically sustainable as there are definitive difficulties in even discussing these policies*".

Main Discussions and Contributions from Stakeholders
Cash for care.

"*Cash for care also for elderly and independently of income*".

"*Home care allowances have been introduced as a trend of childcare expansion. Is it feasible to have this for older persons? (It is surprising that faced with an ageing population care services for older persons have gained less attention)*".

"*There is a lack of information on tax systems; in Austria there is a proposal for tax free minimum income for families in order to guarantee a minimum income for families no matter how many children they have; it is important to give financial security to families and to compare the tax systems in Europe*".

"*Costs of long term care outside the family are higher than supporting families in caring for their relatives*".

"Most countries spend more on cash vs. tax benefits, it would be useful to see what the motivation for that is".

Different perspectives on families...

"We have to support families' freedom of choice regarding care arrangements: there is a great investment in day care but what do we give to the families that look after the children themselves? Families don't have equal opportunities to fulfill their wishes as long as family policies support certain forms of family and neglect other ones; we have to focus on the wishes of families and they are very different".

"Lone parent families and blended families seem to be more valued, they are regarded as modern families and married young couples are looked at as traditional families".

"How can we encourage young people to fulfill their wish of having children and a family?"

Children's perspective and available data.

"Asking for children's wellbeing seems to be an incorrect political question".

"There are many indicators on the quantity aspects of childcare but there is a lack of indicators on the quality of childcare; there are often two indicators which are also covered by OECD family database: child staff ratio and educational levels of childcare employees, but these are very poor indicators for comparative research and even for these indicators we still do not have reliable and comparative data".

"Family care/maternal care or childcare/non-maternal care? We need research on the long term; there is a lot of political talk but very little research on what is best for children, particularly smaller children under one year old; it is important to carry out early childcare longitudinal studies in different countries".

"It is also important to look at early childcare and how it affects both children's learning and psychological maturation as well as the effects of early childcare on parenthood, how does it affect being a parent, their health, their psychological maturation?"

"We have a lot of quantitative data but we need more qualitative aspects including psycho-social health, satisfaction in the family life…"

"There is a lot of quantitative data but still they are not reliable because they are not comparative e.g. childcare expenditures and outcomes".

The inevitable and increasingly important link between family policies and employment policies.

"More flexible working hours are needed but it could be interesting to create specific training courses for mothers or fathers who after parental leave get back to work; it should be the responsibility of the company to give them training in order to help them keep up with their career".

"Nowadays family policies go along with the situation of the labour market".

"One of the most important aspect of family policy in the future concerns flexible working conditions in the labour market; it is utopia to expect that all the children will be cared at home by families; families are also needed in the employment market, the question is: can we be there and also take care of our children and of our parents when they grow old? It is crucial to focus on the simultaneous combination between both employment and care; also women are today more educated and therefore they want to work".

"Flexibility might also mean more precarious employment".

"The flexible working conditions should be grounded in the perspectives of the employees and not only employers…"

Employers' perspective.

"Small and medium size employers have more difficulties in replacing the people taking leave; when talking about leaves we often underestimate the employer side, we tend to emphasise the state's point of view or the child's point of view or the parents' and families' point of view but there are also impacts for employers; employers must be involved in the discussion of these policies".

Wider focus when looking at State Families policies.

"Focus on state family policies and on central level or even in federal state structures might lead us to miss some substantial developments and dimensions related to family policies. One of the major developments is that there is an increase in actors and stakeholders who are discussing and debating family policies; Commission makes directives within the limits of what these major actors have agreed upon".

"The implementation of family policy measures is increasingly carried out at the regional local level, so it is a huge challenge to try to capture any comparison between all member states of the Union, for example through case studies; important implementations of family policy are made at local level. If we get too centralised we are missing the implementation of policy measures and remain distant from what really happens to families".

"We know that there are different family models as there are different State family policies, but also regional and local policies need to be much more explored; are there differences between national and local levels of policies (and also between countries) regarding which type of families they are addressing? There is a need to address all types of families in terms of an approach to social justice and sometimes that can be more evident on the local level".

The crucial role of time management in family policies.

"If family policies are usually looked at as a tool kit of three policies – benefits in cash, benefits in kind (different types of childcare services) the third one is time and time management. Increasingly public authorities try to seduce employers to do more about time management (flexible working hours) because they have their whole agenda of employment levels, getting people into employment, keeping people in employment (specially women and mothers), so time management is also a trend and should be of more interest for the near future".

"Time not only for children but also time for myself, for partnership as well as for community work (for example to work in NGOs)".

"More flexibility in day-care systems, in order to cope with parents' part-time work".

"Love is the main reason for founding a family and the main reason why we have so many divorces and separations is that there is no time to cultivate this love, so the love disappears and then the partnership is dissolved; so love, time, money and resources are the main reasons for families to work or not to work".

"There is a need for policy coherence in Europe when discussing working time because from one side we hear more often the need for workers to work long hours, from the other side we do not have time to care for our children neither to look after our private life, so indeed there is a need for more policy coherence".

Mainstreaming family.

"Gender mainstreaming is on the agenda everywhere so perhaps it would be interesting to introduce family mainstreaming as a new attitude for family policy makers and family science experts; similar to gender mainstreaming and to being aware of environmental protection".

"Family mainstreaming is very important and a very important challenge, a family impact report should be standard and a starting point for the policy decision-making process; what are the consequences for families of policy measures?"

"The lack of consensus on a definition of family is one of the reasons why there is no platform for action for family as there is for youth, for aged people or for people with

disabilities, for example; from the international perspective, if it is not possible to reach a common definition on family at least there should be an agreement on what family functions are, because the definitions of those functions could help to design good policies for families (…) establishing a regional framework on family rights".

"It is important not to define the family and look at all sorts of family models because children do not choose the type of family they are born into".

Framing family policies over the life course and from an intergenerational perspective.

"In most countries family polices relate to pregnancy, birth and early childhood and then when school starts family policies seem to be out of sight (…) they could be important again regarding parent's support for adolescents (…) it is crucial to try to see policies over the life course and according to relevant family transitions in order to support and try to contribute to the wellbeing of families; and also considering the several perspectives and dimensions involved".

"People are expected to work more; grandparents are resources for grandchildren, grandparents will need care in the future; time is not only important when the children are small it is also very important when children become teenagers and it becomes also very important again when we are grandparents".

"Time management should also take into account the 'sandwich generation', those who have to take care both for children and old parents".

Policy evaluation and its consequences in the long term…

"The State is taking care of children on behalf of the families but tomorrow the State will not have that financial capacity due to demographic problems; there will be problems not only with pensions but also with the health system and social policies (…) there is no financial capacity to institutionalise the elderly and they are asking families to take care of the elderly but at same time we are institutionalising the children (…) as we are not taking care of our children how will we expect tomorrow that our children will take care of us?"

"It is also important to evaluate policies that are not explicit family policies but nevertheless impact and influence family outcomes; it is also important to understand the impact of evidence-based policy making".

"Consultation on family policies: it would be interesting to see how family policies are made and how they are being implemented; is there a consultation process on what families actually expect from government and their different needs for reconciling family and work life?"

"Family policy is a long-term task".

Policies are influenced by political beliefs.

"Policies are influenced by a number of factors (…) a very important factor is the political beliefs on which policy makers and experts base their decisions on; if we want to have a better understanding of why politicians and policy makers in Europe make certain decisions we also need to take into account the political belief system".

Typologies/classifications.

"We need to improve typologies and we need specific typologies for post-socialist countries".

"Is it possible to consider the diversity of family oriented policies in only one pot?; typologies do not always help, at least from the perspective of family organisations".

Intergenerational relations.

Youth and older persons: *"there a program of action for youth (international year of youth from August 2010 on); there is also a program of action working on the possibility of establishing a convention on the rights of older persons at the UN forum"*.

"There is not much research on the contribution of older persons to their families; available data show that there seems to be a trend showing that there are more transfers going from the older generation to the younger generation which might be explained by the crisis and unemployment among younger people; but it is important to have more precise data on this".

"The care for the elderly will be a challenge for the next years not only in terms of time but also in terms of social security measures for people caring for other people".

Family policies – should we all have family policies?

"Family must be nurtured from the inside; there might be too much family policy and too much control from the State…how do we foster that inner motivation for family? Are family policies a good thing in that context?"

How to evaluate family policies?

"Without knowing the aims of the policies how can we evaluate policies? For evaluation we would need information on what are the goals of special family policies; usually politicians do not explicit the aims of these policies; we would also need to know how much money was invested as well as with what results; this kind of efficiency is difficult to evaluate".

"The aim of any family policy is social justice; standards of living between families in democratic societies require more equality; family policies are prevention policies against poverty and social exclusion and so maybe this can be a form of benchmarking and policy evaluation: the social justice between the different forms of families".

Other topics discussed:

"What is the contribution of families to social inclusion, meaning socialisation of children, and how can families be helped in this role?"

"How is family policy addressing the question of migration and national minorities?"

"What is wellbeing? How to define wellbeing on an emotional level, at the level of social or financial security…?"

"Financing will be a great challenge for the future of family policies, particularly due to the ageing process".

"Need for emphasis on the joy and happiness of having children; having children is quality of life".

Methodological issues

- Need to include under-researched countries – especially the new member states, and/or those who do not belong to the OECD;

- Need for a better, more encompassing and up-to-date typology of 'family policy systems', which also pays attention to dynamics and policy changes;

- In respect to future studies it is important to have a framework that takes into account national variety and the developments in institutional forms, changes over time and available financial resources;

- Need for more in-depth, qualitative comparisons to understand and explain family policy reforms across countries;

- More longitudinal studies on the development of family policy in order to assess the impact of policy changes on the overall support for families and on the outcomes of family oriented policies;

- More indicators on the quality of childcare (comparable indicators);

- There is a lot of quantitative data but we need more qualitative aspects including psycho-social health, satisfaction in family life;

- There are also problems with the existing data (e.g. quality of childcare, tax allowances for families);

- More qualitative and quantitative indicators concerning poverty;

- Provision for more systematic national and regional data on family wellbeing.

Major gaps and challenges for research

- Need to broaden the focus from state family policies; e.g. more research on government-NGO relations, occupational family policies, regional and local family policies;

- More data on the total expenditure on family policy in order to assess the impact of policy changes on the overall support for families;

- There is a scarce data on intergenerational relations within families, intergenerational transfers and the overall contribution of older persons to the wellbeing of their families;

- Need for research on the effects of early childcare on parenthood and adult maturation; research on the impact of maternal and non maternal care;

- More research on child poverty in residential care and on the causes of early placement of children in institutional care instead of support for biological families;

- More research on men's role in the family; why they take less parental leave;

- Research on the causes for the breaking up of relationships; how to support marriages and relationships;

- More research on the impact of certain leave schemes on employers and according to company size; small and medium sized employers have more difficulties in replacing the people taking leave;

- More research on the definition of wellbeing and its dimensions from the point of view of the families;

- Media and information technology is an important actor in terms of how it creates and shapes images and perceptions about what should or should not be, what is good or bad, etc.;

- We need to know more about the effects of early-childhood care and education (e.g. effects on child-parent relations);

- The implementation of family policy measures are increasingly carried out at the regional local level, so it is a huge challenge to try to capture differences between all member states of the Union, for example through case studies;

- We need to know more about (effects of) policies which are not explicit family policies, but also impact on families (e.g. employment policies);

- We need to know more about belief systems and the policy ideas of family policy-makers (and the differences across countries).

Key policy issues

- Family mainstreaming is needed: "*As there is no international plan of action on family (such programmes of action exist for ageing and youth), it would be worthwhile to explore the possibility of having a regional EU framework on the family, and at least document the attempts at creating such a framework if there have been any*";

- To work on a common international framework on definitions of the family or on the definition of family functions in order to make good policies for families;

- Integrating the family perspective into overall policy making;

- And involving families and a variety of actors in policy-making;

- Policies and programmes supporting intergenerational solidarity;

- Frame family policies over the life course;

- Monitoring and evaluating family policies with the aim of benchmarking (Exchange of information on good policies and practices);

- There is a shortage of social work programs to assist the families of children under court supervision;

- More policies should focus on work and care (flexible working conditions) from the perspective of employees;

- More flexibility in day care systems in order to cope with parent's part-time work;

- Increasing importance of public authorities on the local and regional levels (combining national resources with regional and local ones in order to finance family policies);

- Much more research needed on the alternative sources of funding of social protection systems; family policy is very dependent on social protection systems;

- Impact analysis and evaluation studies for policy makers; important to grasp impact of policy measures; policies are moving rather frequently over the years;

- More investment on infrastructures for children in public spaces, particularly in cities with disadvantaged areas;

- 'Social protection floor', based on universal entitlement to social protection;

- How far does policy-making include the results from research (analysing the communication of and reactions to research results);

- Specific policy measures concerning social protection for people caring for older or disabled people.

Existential Field 4 – *Family, living environments and local policies*

Chair:

Ellu Saar, Tallinn University

Keynote speakers/initial discussants:

Leeni Hansson, Tallinn University

Ellu Saar, Tallinn University

Francesco Belletti, Forum of Family Associations, Italy

Rapporteur:

Epp Reista, Tallinn University

Stakeholders/other participants:

Françoise Meauze, CNAFC France (member of UNAF)

Leonids Mucenieks, Union of Latvian Large Families Associations

Marek Havrda, European Commision

Maria do Rosário Mckinney, Forum Européen des Femmes (FEF)

Nathalie d'Ursel, New Women for Europe

Roumjana Modeva, NM « Women and Mothers Against Violence » - member of COFACE

Sylvie von Lowis, World Movement of Mothers

Organisation of the workshop and keynote speeches

The focus group began with an introductory presentation from Leeni Hansson (University of Tallinn) on the subject: "*Family life and living environment: different ways of development*". She started her presentation by giving a theoretical approach to the concept of living environment according to the perspective of Urie Bronfenbrenner, which defines four social environmental systems that have effects on family life:

- Micro-system: immediate environments and settings (e.g. home, school, informal networks, etc.);

- Meso-system: A system comprising connections between immediate environments (i.e. home and a child's school);

- Exo-system: External environmental settings which indirectly affect family life (e.g. parents' workplace settings);

- Macro-system: Large cultural and social contexts (economy and labour market, legislation, educational system, etc.).

Focusing on the macro-system, and drawing attention to poverty rates, Leeni hansson highlighted that the today's EU is characterised by similarities and contrasts between countries. For example, according to the Eurobarometer two adults without children face a lesser risk of poverty than the average of total population; families with three children are more at risk of poverty; single parents with dependent children, single elderly people, and especially single elderly female are the household types with the highest risk-of-poverty. These general trends of poverty are similar among the majority of the member states, and differences between countries are not so significant. However, when comparing poverty rates of the total population with poverty rates of two adults with 3 or more children, there are huge differences between and within countries. Families with 3 or more children are far more exposed to poverty than the total population in some countries while in other countries poverty rates between total population and large families are more levelled out. According to Leeni Hansson, the countries where there are no significant differences in poverty rates between total population and large families are those where social security benefits are well organised to support families.

Ending her presentation she focussed on research gaps (see research gaps and challenges for research) as well as on what is needed in order to measure living environments and to carry out cross country comparison on family life and living environments.

After Leeni Hansson's presentation, there were some brief comments and another two presentations followed: Epp Reiska and Ellu Sar, both from University of Tallinn

and authors of the report on *Family and living environments,* made a summary of the major trends and research gaps according to six sub topics of the general topic of this focus group: economic situation, employment, education, environmental conditions, housing and local politics. The last presentation, before the debate, came from Francesco Belletti who focussed on *Local politics: programs and best practices model*, also a subtopic of this Existential Field 4.

All presentations were commented on by participants, namely by the stakeholders who were present in this focus group session and who enriched the debate with their suggestions which took into account their field experience. Several key questions and issues were raised and discussed as follows.

Main Discussions and Contributions from Stakeholders
The role of family policy; family policy mainstreaming

The presentation of Leeni Hansson brought into the debate a discussion on the role of social and family policy and the need to monitor its effects on families' well being according to more subjective and comparable indicators: "*Policy makers need reliable indicators of trends in family behaviour to respond to changing family life, and to provide social benefits and services to improve the living environment of families*".

It was also pointed out by participants that many countries do not have a specific department for family policy, in others family policy is integrated or diluted in social policy; therefore there is a need for creating specific departments of family policy and to consider family policy as a mainstream: "*in many European documents we find the concept of cohesion, social, economic, political: the first model of cohesion is the family; we cannot speak about cohesion if there is no cohesion in families; so this approach stressing the Integration of policies might be interesting for the future of mainstream family policy (…) family in the heart of several policies, it is precisely on cohesion policy where we find local development, regional development, sustainability, everything that has an impact of families…we should try to mainstream family in many European policies*".

The need to monitor policies and their effects on family wellbeing was also a major point in the discussion: "*there is a need to evaluate the advancement in family policy by taking into a account the context of different strategies, for example the Lisbon strategy 2000 will continue, but where is the family in these strategies? What has advanced over the last 10 years? Most of times the prognosis is not accomplished. For example, one of the statements of the Lisbon Strategy 2000 was that poverty should be diminished by 10 per cent in 2010, but actually poverty increased by 15 per cent. So what is the advancement? Poverty and social exclusion still exists (…) in*

order to achieve some success we should be monitoring policy advancement and how the policy of member states reflects on family welfare and family wellbeing; where is family in European strategies?"

How to measure living environment? How to define a 'friendly family environment' concept?

Another key issue that was launched into the debate was the question: how to measure living environment? Living environment was presented by Leeni Hansson as a multi dimensional concept with different key elements. Accordingly, she suggested some indicators for measuring what a good living environment consists of: functional housing environments; adequate work places in appropriate locations, adequate educational and child care facilities, adequate services in appropriate locations, a wide range of parks and recreational areas, functional transport networks, a functional municipal infrastructure, an unpolluted, noise-free environment.

It was pointed out that there is a lot of data about the performance of economies and that GDP is the most widely-used measure of economic activity. However it was recognised that it measures only market production and not economic wellbeing; material living standards are more closely associated with measures of real income and consumption but do not tell us anything significant in terms of families' well being.

There was an agreement that what is missing is a perspective that goes beyond GDP: the household perspective as well as a family perspective, e.g. consumer patterns and its unequal distribution according to households and family types…

The importance of parents and families as agents influencing and designing their living environment was also emphasised (their role in defining indicators to measure their wellbeing): *"family well being cannot be measured only by economic indicators such as GDP; the pertinence of the capability approach (access to basic rights, education, being able to care for the people we like… in this context). There is no definite list of things people need to be happy, but research should go to the community, to the local specificities and involve people and their own definitions of their well being…"*

There was a general discussion and a final agreement on the need to construct more subjective indicators related to household and family perspectives with respect to the six subtopics presented by Ellu Saar and Epp Reiska (see research gaps).

Whether we have family friendly environment or not? Work versus family or balance?

"One important impact of the family project platform should be to change the real policy and to create more friendly environments for families…flexible working time does not exist in reality, employers prefer not to employ women with children under 5

neither women who plan to have children (…) *For European citizens it is not so important to have strategies, road maps, white papers, or green papers…but rather to understand how the policy of member states reflects on their own life and on more friendly environments for the family*".

"*In existing policies there are models that do not reflect reality: for example, labour market seems to neglect women's participation while caring for young children; the career of a man is linear but the career of a woman is not so linear but that does not mean that while she is caring she will lose skills, it is often the opposite: women develop a lot of important skills which will be useful when they come back to work…*"

There was also a reference to the theory of preference and lifestyle choices: "*three groups of women: 20% 'home-preference group'; 20% 'work-centred preference group'; 60% 'adaptative preference group', this group refers to women who want to combine work and family…*"

The issue of family-friendly enterprises was also raised in the discussion. The need for a unified definition was pointed out: "*what does it actually mean for a company to be family friendly?*" Examples like childcare facilities and the role in caring for retired employees were mentioned as characteristics that could be included in the definition.

Discussion on methodological approaches; the limitations of existing statistical data:

Specific statistical data is mostly available for macro level country, however there is no specific family-focussed data (for example, by different family types); also there are difficulties in interpreting data as different concepts are not always well defined (e.g. "*if we have to compare families with children: in some countries this refers to families under 16, in some countries 16 is included, in others it is children under 8, in Italy children under the age of 25, when they live with their parents…What are we comparing?*"

There is practically no data available for subjective measures (e.g. "*there are surveys where there are questions on satisfaction with life, family life, housing, leisure time…but who is satisfied? If we want to look from the point of view of the family…is the answer only from the person who is answering the questionnaire or is it shared by the partner or other family members as well? We do not know, we do not have the family perspective…*"

"*We are getting basically two types of data: financial data, from the statistical offices, averages for prices and income and the survey data from the euro barometer data, however, there is a huge problem in survey data because they just give a perception and very often researchers and policy makers do not realise that this is just a perception; perceptions are important but we need to see behavioural data,*

economics, psychological behaviour in order to catch the behaviour of families and individuals inside of families".

"How is poverty measured? Is it really a poverty line? What is the meaning of poverty? Income is a good measure but it is not enough to measure poverty in rural areas…does not reflect reality; there is a need for qualitative designs; averages do not help us in telling who needs what… what kind of families are facing troubles? What kind of classification do we need in order to disaggregate data? There are different types of classifications which need to be developed further – one challenge for the final report…"

The importance of longitudinal data was also stressed and the example of the life cycle was given due to the fact that caring responsibilities change over time.

The crucial importance of a double approach when studying family and environment

This existential field was considered to be essential to capture macro changes and to carry out macro analysis on how family changes affect the environment and how environment influences the families. There was a general agreement on the lack of data on the impact of families on the environment: *"in the report there is some information on the environment but does not go further on sustainability indexes and on the linkages between the household behaviour and the family behaviour and sustainability. What can the internal changes inside the families mean for sustainability and related polices…? (…) it is very important to try to link the internal changes of the family and the internal processes of decision making inside families and what their impact is on the sustainability of the environment".*

Sustainability was considered to be a key challenge and it was recognised that it is important to identify what are the changing patterns in families in Europe (less marriages, more single parents), what they can mean from the point of view of sustainability. In this respect families are very important and *"specially mothers because they make the daily decisions on, for example, purchasing, using energy, etc.; so they have a huge impact on daily activities with impact on environmental management (…) try to link the internal changes of the family and their internal processes of decision making with their impact on sustainability of the environment".*

"There are changes inside the family, how are these changes impacting outside? There are changes in the relationships inside the family: what are they bringing to the overall changes in society and the environment?"

The gender perspective was also introduced by one participant who considered that gender had been forgotten in the discussion; it was mentioned that parents cannot be systematically assimilated as 'mothers' following a traditional vision of parenting and domestic tasks; there is a need to consider new forms of fatherhood and the increasing movement towards gender equality within families and to understand

how the improvement of work and family life balance also interconnects with environments; a question was raised concerning the gendered configuration of public spaces; the example that was given was that most interviewed fathers usually mention difficulties of caring in public spaces which are often conceived just for women (e.g. changing tables in women's toilets).

How to do family policy at local level? How to harmonise the different responsibilities of managing the municipality as a public actor?

Francesco Belletti's presentation stressed the importance of family policy at a local level, as well as the need to spread best practices models. According to Francesco Belletti, the local level is acquiring more and more relevance because at local level actions can be targeted to specific needs and problems can be tackled in a more "*rounded and responsive way*".

Focusing on the local level also means stressing the family as an important actor and therefore the importance of family associations, volunteers and non-governmental organisations were also mentioned: "*If we want to know families we have to know their local representatives, families associations which must be organised at the local level and recognised by the state; it is a way to get into national families; that is why NGOs are so important in the family platform*".

The main point that was highlighted with respect to local family policies was that there is a need for more research on local welfare in order to carry out comparative approaches on the good or best practices models; it was recognised that the collection of good practices needs, nevertheless, to become more systematic to allow for comparisons and an evaluation of the results achieved.

Emphasis was put on the importance of setting up a research agenda and developing a monitoring system of local family policies; there was a general agreement on the crucial importance of qualitative approaches which seem to be more productive in detecting the complex and interactive mechanism of local networks and finding the actors that determine local policy's efficacy: stakeholders, institutions, etc.

There was also a general agreement on the need to make further research on the portability and reproducibility of good practices: "*dissemination of good practice needs a sort of supra-national Agency*"; "*new research needs, actions, strategies and policies should therefore include an explicit reference to 'family mainstreaming' (…) research on good practices can help other countries and their state policies*".

Other relevant points of discussion within the focus group:

"*The need to look at the family as a resource and as an opportunity and not as a problem*".

"Do parents have the number of children they want?"

"Does Europe need children? Implications on workers' future retirement pensions…"

"Do mother organisations recognise the role of fathers?"

"The importance of parenting support".

"The impact of migration on environment (people who are left behind are older and struggle to survive; and the difficult integration of different cultures and religions…)"

Methodological issues

- The overall need for valid and synchronised definitions and concepts used in research (particularly a synchronised definition of the family);

- The crucial importance of qualitative approaches when measuring family living standards;

- The importance of the life-course approach and the longitudinal survey design in order to make continuous monitoring of family wellbeing;

- The need for more cross national comparable data and panel research, also for the studying in rural areas;

- More data on specific cohorts of people;

- Specific family-focussed data both on macro and micro level living environments;

- The importance of a family/family member perspective (and not only one representative of the family answering the questionnaire and speaking on behalf of the whole family);

- Special focus on new family forms (e.g. LAT);

- A crucial need for a subjective approach (subjective indicators) for the research on wellbeing of families and satisfaction with living environments by family members;

- Need for up-to-date data, which should be available also on regional and local level, because the differences within countries are also relevant and changes in living environments, especially in the economy, are rapid;

- Need for some information still not available in European level studies such as ethnicity;

- Scarce data on elderly population when comparing with available data for children and childcare.

Major gaps and challenges for research

Economic situation:

- Need to include a household and family perspective: more information on how families obtain and use resources as money, material resources, available services, time, etc.;

- Lack of information on incomes and consumer patterns and their distribution through family types;

- Overall there is a lack of subjective measures of economic wellbeing; even when available data are not cross country comparable.

Education:

- The absence of data on access to education (e.g. access to primary education in rural areas and access to lifelong learning education), school dropout and comparable surveys exploring the connections between education and other outcomes related with the wellbeing of families;

- The need to research more the role of family in primary socialisation as a component of education; parents' involvement in children's schools; parent's skills and parenting support;

- There is a lack of studies on education and schools for minority groups;

- Very difficult to find data concerning rural data and differences in relation to urban areas;

- Need for further data on percentage of children attending crèches and pre-school (rural and urban areas, according to age).

Employment:

- The lack of data about flexible working time arrangements according to households and types of families; lack of data on cross-broader employment;

- The need to monitor family friendly policies at local, regional, national and cross-countries levels (e.g. companies with childcare and elderly care facilities).

Environmental conditions:

- There is a need for an agreement between researchers on what elements should define what constitutes a family-friendly environment;

- There is a lack of environmental indicators when considering the families' point of view: for example, there is no data on the amount of people or special groups of people exposed to different contaminants in the environment; there also a lack of comparable data on the existence and quality of green areas in European cities;

- There is also the need to carry out research on the gendering of public spaces;

- There is a need for research developing a double perspective: how changes in families affect environmental conditions and not only the impact of environmental conditions on families.

Housing:

- There is a need to update existing data as well as a need to make them pertinent and comparable, as there are some subjectivities in conceptual definitions (for example, the number of rooms is used in countries with different stages of development, and affordable decent housing is still an ambiguous concept without a common definition).

Key policy issues

- There is a need to update existing data as well as a need to make them pertinent and comparable by improving concepts and definitions;

- It is important to set up a research agenda on local family policies, by developing methodologies and instruments for comparison and evaluation of local welfare and by building up a sort of family mainstreaming in local family policies;

- The need for a data base, easily available on the web, on best practice models (to promote benchmarking) at local, regional or national levels;

- Recognition at policy level of the social and economic value of the non-remunerated work of parents and carers at home, by granting social benefits on equal terms and promoting innovative forms of remuneration;

- The need for more policies facilitating the re-entry of women into the labour market after career breaks for family reasons, including life-long learning opportunities;

- The importance of formulating general goals for family policy at an EU level, though not interfering in national family policies;

- The need for co-operation with NGOs on both local and country levels; the importance of NGOs with regard to the diagnosis of local policies needs;

- The need for better co-ordination between family policy and social policy; one suggestion which could be helpful in this respect would be concentrating the policies influencing families in one ministry or department.

Existential Field 5 – *Family management*

Chair:

Uwe Uhlendorff, Technical University of Dortmund

Keynote speakers/initial discussants:

Marietta Pongrácz, Demographic Research Institute, Budapest

Michael Meuser, Technical University of Dortmund

Rapporteur:

Veronika Herche, Demographic Research Institute, Budapest

Stakeholders/other participants:

Alexander Schwentner, UNICEF Austria

Anne Charlier-des-Touches, FEFAF

Anne-Claire de Liedekerke, World Movement of Mothers – Europe

Florence von Erb, World Movement of Mothers

Gordon Neufeld, University of British Columbia

Lydie Keprova, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Czech Republic

Madeleine Wallin, HARO

Martina Leibovici-Muhlberger, Alliance for Childhood European Network Group (ARGE)

Stanislav Trnovec, Club of Large Families Slovakia

Tijne Berg-le Clercq, Netherlands Youth Institute

Zsuzsa Gerber, Hungarian Women's Alliance

Organisation of the workshop and keynote speeches

The focus group started with a presentation from Marietta Pongrácz (Hungarian Demographic Research Institute and leader of this existential field on *Family management*) who highlighted the main results of the working report on the general topic "*Patterns and Trends of Family Management in the European Union*". The presentation covered three dimensions of family management: allocation of tasks and gender roles; parenting and childrearing; family and work. After this presentation, a brief discussion took place between all participants.

A second presentation was made by Michael Meuser (Technical University of Dortmund), focusing on the changing culture of fatherhood and on how fathers put fatherhood into practice. During his presentation on "*Fathers and Family Management – Expectations, Pretensions and Social Practice*", Michael Meuser identified several research challenges in the field and also contributed to an interesting discussion on the "*new cultural idea of the new father*" and its interconnections with the labour market structure and the role fathers play in family management.

A third and final presentation came from Gordon Neufeld (University of British Columbia) on "*Working Mothers and the Wellbeing of Children*". Gordon Neufeld is a developmental psychologist and his presentation gave the focus group a psychologist's perspective on child wellbeing and child development; the spotlight of this final presentation was the concept of child attachment.

After each presentation there was an open debate and afterwards participants were asked to focus and identify main research gaps related with each discussion. At the end of the discussion all participants were asked to write down two research issues and one key policy question; these suggestions were regarded by all participants as an important contribution for reporting this session. Therefore, the focus group ended its work by summarising the central points and suggestions of the debate for the future research agenda.

Main Discussions and Contributions from Stakeholders

The presentation from Marietta Pongrácz, Hungarian Demographic Research Institute, was the starting point for a first brief discussion on the outcomes of the report. Participants made some general suggestions:

- The report reflects the overemphasis of research on the division of work among heterosexual couple families without giving enough attention to differences in other family types, therefore failing to reflect the variability and changing nature of family management patterns in European families; for

example, single parent families, foster families and families caring for disabled persons must not be completely left out;

- Another suggestion refers to the importance of including marginal groups such as migrant families and minorities (participants considered that there is little information on how migrant families organise family management and raised the question of whether they tend to have traditional orientations and values…);

- The role of children in family management was also mentioned given the fact that in some European families children are an important support in family management, such as being responsible for some household duties as well as for the care of young siblings (there was also a discussion about the age children should start to participate in domestic work at home, and the importance of early socialisation regarding domestic work for the future of gender sharing was also pointed out);

- Discussants also pointed out that existing research on a national level, which is not necessarily in the English language, can be an important contribution;

- Comparative existing cross-national research needs to be reviewed and continued on a regular basis.

The overall debate within this focus group was very much centred on family management concerning families with children (heterosexual couples) and particularly their daily life after having children. The most relevant subjects brought into the discussion included the challenges of caring during the life course - childrearing but also teenager care and grandparents' care – the relations of negotiation within the family (including all family members as well as the role of children in family management) and the interconnections between paid and unpaid work.

With regard to childcare the debate covered several perspectives: parents', mothers' and father's perspective, the labour market perspective, the child perspective and the gender equality issue. It became evident that these perspectives are different and not always reconcilable; if on the one hand they can be complementary, on the other hand they are also conflicting with each other.

The following points summarise this discussion:

Childcare, mother's or parents' care in the early years of a child's life? The child's perspective.

The early years of a child's life were considered as extremely important for the development of the future person. Therefore, there was a discussion on the best

arrangements concerning the care of children during this stage of life. On the one hand, the importance of giving more value to parental leave was underlined, not just in terms of increasing parental leave time but essentially to promote parental leave for mothers in order to motivate them to stay at home with their children as long as possible. However, this perspective discourages mothers to go back to work after childbirth. In general, mothers are viewed as being the crucial actors in developing and strengthening the emotional bonds with the child and the child's balanced development as a person: "*family management has to be focussed from the perspective of the child's wellbeing and not the wellbeing of industry because we are shaping the generation of the future*".

As a psychologist of development Gordon Neufeld's presentation reinforced this perspective by bringing into the discussion the concept of child's attachment. Although considering that gender is neutral concerning children's attachment, Gordon Neufeld argued that after birth a child tends to be more attached to mothers than to fathers and launched into the debate a controversial issue: that the focus on child wellbeing and development implies that child attachment is more important than gender equality, "*mothers are potentially more affective rearing children* (…) *children care nothing about gender equality*". According to his view, the discussion on childcare in the early years of a child's life must start from the child's perspective, from the centrality of the concept of child attachment: the crucial importance of who the child is attached to and that working attachments need to be fully developed. Accordingly, day care providers and teachers are considered to be a handicap because children are not so attached to them; facing separation affects children profoundly as well as their future development as an adolescent and later as an adult. On the other hand, the deeper the child attaches the easier it is to be physical apart. Therefore Gordon Neufeld questions the model of early separation considering that the child should be given more time in order to enable the full development of attachment.

In the ensuing discussion, the so called child's perspective was considered to be strongly mother centred (the stay at home mother) by other participants, in contrast with other perspectives highlighting the social construction of biological bonds, the gender equality issue, the increasing participation of women in the labour market as well as the positive impacts of high quality childcare on parents and children's fulfillment. It was also stressed that there are studies that show that high quality institutional care has no negative outcomes in terms of child wellbeing.

The main challenges for research that resulted from this discussion are that research should address this issue of children's attachment and that more research is needed on the impact of early childcare on children wellbeing.

For Gordon Neufeld one of most critical issues is that "*today we cannot go back to the parent in a home situation*". Therefore, and given that maternal employment is

likely to increase, "*one of the most important questions we need to face today is how can mothers work outside the home and still cultivate the attachment required to raise their children; how can we best cultivate the attachment to the other adults involved in raising children, their relatives, parents, teachers, how can we mobilise grandparents as supporting parents…*"

From a policy point of view the question is: what policy measures do we need to keep the child attachment intact?

Men's/fathers' perspectives.

The main discussions around this subject were raised by Michael Meuser's presentation. There was a general agreement on the fact that during the last two or three decades a new cultural idea of fatherhood has been developed in western European countries around the notions of the '*new father*', '*active father*', '*involved father*'. However there is no widely consensual definition, and we still have little research on what this new ideal of the 'involved father' means in terms of duties and participation in family management.

"*Our knowledge on how fathers put fatherhood into practice is still limited and incomplete; we know more about the changing culture of fatherhood, on what is expected from fathers and how fathers themselves think about fatherhood but concerning the conduct of fatherhood, the practice of fatherhood, we must be satisfied with some spotlights and the small data we can rely on is not consistent*".

Which role do men play in family management?

Father's participation in family management differs across European countries; employment patterns show that the man is not the sole breadwinner (both parents work often full-time), but men and women do not contribute in the same way; also patterns of employment (both parents working full time) do not match the patterns of domestic work (women still do the majority of domestic work) and this relation requires a better understanding.

The main point stressed by Michael Meuser is that "*there is a huge gap between the culture of fatherhood (that focuses on fathers' involvement in family management) and the conduct of fatherhood that is still affected by traditional patterns of the male breadwinner (…) if from one side men wish to participate more in family life, as some surveys indicate, on the other side they only fulfill these wishes to a low degree*".

Therefore there was a discussion on the need to carry out further research on this gap, namely the need to link family research and gender research. According to Michael Meuser, "*until now fathers have being studied as an uniform group by comparing fathers' practices and attitudes with mothers' practices and attitudes, but we need more data on specific groups of fathers, more data on class, ethnicity, and*

educational background of fathers; working class fathers usually do not participate in the discourse of involved fatherhood as educated middle class fathers do. However working class fathers are involved in family management on a very pragmatic ground, they do it but they do not talk about it; middle class fathers regularly talk about it but seldom do it; therefore research should focus more on practices than on discourse (…) research should go deeper into the everyday dynamics of family management and into the conditions of realising traditional and non traditional patterns of family manage".

Quality time concept of fathers caring does not necessarily create the father's sharing…

According to Michael Meuser, there are several images of fathers which coexist: the traditional breadwinner; the modern breadwinner; the holistic father. Qualitative and quantitative studies show that the modern breadwinner father is the most common pattern among contemporary men (the father sees himself as the main breadwinner while the mother is responsible for domestic work, childcare and family life, but the division of work is not so strict); the modern breadwinner assists his wife in domestic work; identity is both work and family centred; his presence within the family is relatively high during pregnancy and after childbirth but decreases afterwards.

Another main point that was stressed by Michael Meuser is that we cannot talk about a father's contribution to family management without talking about the structures of the labour market. Changes in family management and getting fathers more involved are not only caused by changing attitudes towards fatherhood but can also be caused by structural changes of the labour market and working conditions independently of the father's intentions: "*in understanding changes of family life we must go outside the family and take the workplace more into account*".

The major question is: how is it possible to combine paternal engagement and family management with an occupational career?

The general agreement on research gaps is that research needs to focus on the interconnections between labour market structures, intra family dynamics in everyday life (gender negotiations and women's influence in the domestic sphere) and men's attitudes towards professional career development.

The family perspective. Are there qualitative studies on the subjective perspective of family members?

"*On what parents really need and want for their family; on what they think about gender gaps in family management; on what they think about task allocation and work family balance?*"

Participants agreed that although there are some studies on a national level there is a gap in comparable cross national studies both at the level of qualitative and longitudinal studies.

The main idea stressed in this discussion was that the wellbeing of families is related to families' choices: "*how do they create and plan their family life? What are families' real needs today?*"

"*Taking or not the advantages of parental leave should be parents' decision; parents should also be aware of the implications of that decision on the child's wellbeing*".

Family management and the life-course perspective.

It was often mentioned that when studying family management there is a need to consider the transitions in the life-course (to parenthood, children entering school, children leaving home, caring for elderly…) In particular the perspective of caring during the life course: for children, teenagers, grandparents…"*who will take care of the grandparents in the next years…?*"; "*what are the effects of adolescence in family management? Family management is often associated to when you have a child; but what is happening in the family when the children become teenagers…?*"

The importance of defining family management as an allocation of tasks shared by all household members was also raised in the discussion; therefore it was stressed that it is important to include in research the role children play in the allocation of tasks.

There was also a discussion on how economic pressures in a time of economic crisis impact on family management and affect family decisions (one participant mentioned the case of mothers in Romania that take parental leave even though they leave their children with family relatives and go to work due to financial constraints).

Gender equality perspective…and family management of unpaid work.

"*The patterns and trends of family management in the European Union show that female participation in the labour market is increasing across the EU in each member state. The male breadwinner model is being replaced by alternative models with variations between and within countries. Characteristics of the welfare policy have been found to be responsible for cross-country variations. Good quality childcare services with a generous parental leave system can be major tools in reshaping female employment patterns*".

"*Yet, women still spend less time in the labour market, are more likely to take part-time jobs, and have more career breaks than men do. At the same time they are still primarily responsible for housework, as well as for child rearing, spending on average*

twice as many hours on these activities then men do. Very little qualitative research has been carried out to assess this phenomenon".

The idea of a gap between men and women's discourses and their daily family management was again brought into the debate. It was recognised that there are some quantitative studies that show that men want to participate more in family life but it is important to research further why there is still a huge gap between their wishes and their practices. Therefore it was stressed that it is important to have a qualitative approach in order to have a better understanding of gender interactions within families.

"*What happens inside the family, men work more and women care more, but why, how do they see this…do they have this perception, how they justify it; interview both men and women: why do they choose a kind of pattern within the family*".

"*Both parents, men and women, subscribe to the idea of equality within the family and they also have that perception about their own family; nevertheless the practices do not reveal this idea, rather remaining in a traditional pattern of division of work…*"

Regulation was underlined as a key concept to understand this type of negotiations.

Another issue that was also raised is that family management is completely different whether there is a child or not; after the birth of the first child both parents increase family time but there is a growing discrepancy over time: men increase the working hours and women increase family time…; it was suggested that it would be interesting to compare the division of domestic work in childless couples; childless couples show more tendency to share household tasks but with the birth of a child differences increase…

The possible long term effects of policies on gender equality was also referred to, given the example of the Swedish men who seem to participate more in family management with more gender equality: "*to what extent is there a kind of long term policy impact on the development of such participation…*"

How to value unpaid work? Are there policies that value unpaid work? How to value parental leave more? What would happen in Europe without all this unpaid work?

"*How to value unpaid work (domestic work, childcare and elderly care) of men and women, and specially if there are children?*" The issue of the value of unpaid work was raised. Unpaid work does not necessary imply remuneration, and two ways of valuing parenting work were mentioned: recognition and remuneration. However participants also agreed that there are different psychological effects of paid and unpaid work on the individual; "*if you get paid for work you feel you get appreciation, unpaid work is valued in a different way…*"

There was a point related to the need to change mentalities in order to recognise the importance of new roles. However it was also argued that changing attitudes is not enough and that the crucial question is that in capitalist societies paid work is valued and unpaid work not.

It was also stressed that mothers working at home are not valued by policies or recognised by pension systems. A suggestion was made to include unpaid work concerning childrearing in pension calculations as well as in GDP.

By the end of the focus group discussion, participants identified research gaps both in terms of content and methodology. Important fields of research which might be taken up by future research and some key policy issues relevant to this research field were also identified.

Methodological issues

- More cross-national comparative research quantitative and qualitative as well as longitudinal studies on the several dimensions of family management;

- More qualitative research should be conducted to focus on the reasons for the unequal division of work rather than the division itself and also on the everyday dynamics of family management;

- More research focusing on differentiation by the age of child in the family should be conducted;

- It would be important to refine the set of explanatory factors included in causal modeling (macro factors/role of welfare state);

- Harmonisation of indicators and criteria when measuring childcare is needed (differentiating tasks such as playing, listening and talking to the child, putting the child into bed, driving to school…);

- Harmonisation of indicators and criteria when studying and defining housework (studies are measuring different items, it is difficult to measure something which is not done on a regular basis);

- How to measure child's attachment (indicators at emotional and psychological level);

- The need to study family management taking into account the life course perspective (considering different periods of transitions in the family life course: early childcare, child entering school, adolescence, children leaving

home, elderly care, divorce, remarriage…) and their impact on family management;

- Include understudied countries where family management patterns are poorly understood as well as national studies, for example reviewed non-European research papers which can raise important issues and interesting aspects.

Major gaps and challenges for research

There was an overall agreement on the following research gaps and challenges:

- More research is needed on the interactions/negotiations between parents regarding the division of paid and unpaid work (their practices, perceptions, justifications, preferences, factors that influence work division);

- More research on best practices for valuing unpaid work should be collected;

- More comparative research on the subjective perspective of the family members: what do they really want; what are their needs;

- Looking at every day dimensions of family management and negotiation processes between father and mother;

- More research on the impact of structural constraints, cultural factors and the role of welfare policies on family management;

- Including children's contribution to domestic/paid labour in research;

- The need to study family management according to children's age;

- Taking into consideration children's views and opinions regarding their wishes in family management;

- Linking family research and research on the labour market (particularly regarding choices in family management and structural constraints set by the labour market and career orientation);

- The impact of the economic crisis on family decisions and family policies should be better researched;

- There is a huge need to include the male perspective on family management since there is a lack of quantitative and qualitative comparable studies on men's practices and perspectives of family management;

- There is a lack of research on the images of fatherhood, the conditions and obstacles for realising these models, and little attention given to the constraints to family change related to the imperatives of the labour market;

- More research on how the new adolescence patterns, substance abuse, violence and insecurity, affect family allocation of task management and involvement in the work force (The importance of studies dealing with the work/family conflict of employed mothers of adolescents with high risk factors for substance use);

- More research on families with high stress levels (also identifying the major factor of stress, what promotes stress and what diminishes it);

- Taking into account family management of marginal groups (minorities, migrants, families with disabled persons, families affected by poverty, etc.);

- Taking into account the diversity of families (heterosexual, same sex, blended, single parents, LAT...);

- The need for more research on quality time parents spend with children (Primary/secondary childcare time) in order to get to know the best type of educational attitudes parents have towards children, with regard to setting limits, teaching, listening skills, educational security, sharing a good time together, etc.;

- Conducting studies regarding child's perspective, namely more research on best practices of work-family balance which allow children to develop a secure attachment to their parents and reduce the stress level within the family during the early years of a child:

  - Impact of early high quality childcare on child's wellbeing and development;

  - Long term effects of early life experiences of maternal deprivation in early years of life;

  - The benefits of parental leave from the perspective of the child's wellbeing;

  - Impact of affordable high quality childcare on women's participation in the labour market;

  - Understanding the conditions which are required to preserve a child's attachment to parents/mothers when they work outside home;

- Understanding the family friendly actions which employers can use to preserve attachments between children and parents (collection of best practices in order to promote and defend attachment).

Key policy issues

Family policies should:

- Support a better work-life balance (flexible working hours, part-time work, increased leave entitlements, improving available high quality and affordable child care);

- Support family members (including children) by monitoring their own wishes and needs;

- Enable families to make their own choices regarding their family-life styles;

- Empower and support the role of children within the family;

- Consider the importance of childrens' attachment to their parents in the first years of a child life;

- Involve parents in policy making;

- Value unpaid work (particularly child-rearing) by including it in the pension calculation/GDP;

- Support male participation in unpaid work (both domestic and childcare; research on best practices at policy level, and local, regional, national and international levels).

Existential Field 6 – *Social Care and Social Services*

Chair:

Kimmo Jokinen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Keynote speakers/initial discussants:

Marjo Kuronen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Anneli Anttonen, University of Tampere, Finland

Rapporteur:

Teppo Kroger, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Stakeholders/other participants:

Ada Garriga Cots, International Federation for Family Developement

Agata D'Addato, Eurochild

Ana Maria Comito, Coface-handicap and Co.Fa.As.Clelia

Anna Maria Vella, Cana Movement, Malta

Claude Martin, EHESP – School of Public Health

Dorottya Szikra, Faculty of Social Sciences, Eötvös University

Judit Gazsi, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour - Hungary

Lorenza Rebuzzini, Forum delle Associazioni Familiaei (FDAF)

Rada Elenkova, The Bulgarian Gender-Research Foundation (BGRF)

Sabrina Stula, Observatory for Social Political Developments in Europe

Organisation of the workshop and keynote speeches

The focus group started with a presentation from Marjo Kuronen (University of Jyväskylä, Finland) who together with Kimmo Jokinen and Teppo Kröger authored the report "*Existential Field 6: Social Care and Social Services*". Marjo gave a summary of the main findings of this report which reviewed most of European comparative research carried out since the mid 1990s on social care and social services.

Marjo's presentation was followed by a key note speech from Anneli Anttonen (University of Tampere, Finland) on "*Care Policies in Transition*".

Anneli Anttonen commented the report by discussing issues and questions which are currently central in comparative research on social care. She stated that social care is of growing importance due to ageing and the related increase of care needs but also due to the adult worker model that requires both parents of young children to work and which has gained popularity within EU employment policies. According to her, a key question is what happens to informal care as it is and will stay the major source of care. For example, the tendency to expect workers to extend their careers in paid work (working longer hours and working longer over the life course) can represent a kind of a threat to care and informal care as it can bring difficulties for spousal carers and other carers and therefore cause new tensions between paid and unpaid work.

She stated that in the context of labour market relations and changes in employment we need to look at care as real work because care is work and an activity somebody has to do; "*care is a labour-intensive activity*". There is a continuous need for more and better care resulting from the expectations of the ageing middle classes; this represents a big challenge for care services and policies. Good quality care is important especially for the future as people develop more consciousness of social care. On the other hand, there are major inequalities (care and social capital are needed to manage and negotiate complex systems of social policies); there are large differences between groups of people in their access to care services and to informal resources. Anneli Anttonen identified an international tendency to move from services-in-kind to monetary benefits and an emergence of new hybrid forms of work and care.

She also commented on the concept of defamilialisation. According to her, defamilialisation is a problematic concept because it decreases the role of families as a source of care. However, she considers that people still invest morally in families and informal care and that family responsibilities remain strong everywhere: "*the moral commitment to informal care is very strong*". Defamilialisation may be related to social policy and although there are more public policies, this does not mean that the idea of family is getting weaker. Even if people are moving into the paid work they still have a strong commitment to the nearest family members.

Anneli Anttonen also mentioned that transnational care is an emerging field that is becoming central in international care research. She was referring not only to immigrants as care workers or care workers in private houses but also to the different strategies migrant families have to develop in order to care for relatives living in another country or continent; the importance of transnational relations of care and how care is organised.

Finally, she raised the question of why the European Union has a European Employment Strategy but does not have a European Care Strategy: "*if the European Union wants to promote employment for everyone it must take into account care, what happens to care, they go hand in hand...if the European Union needs an employment strategy it also needs a care strategy*".

A discussion followed the two key note speeches and there were four stakeholders who presented statements. After the statements, the remaining time of the workshop was used for a general discussion about major gaps within comparative social care and social service research. Such gaps are unavoidably connected to key care policy questions so the discussion touched upon necessary improvements in care policies as well. Before presenting a systematic overview of major gaps and challenges for research as well the main suggestions at policy level, the following paragraphs summarise the general discussion that took place in this focus group.

Main Discussions and Contributions from Stakeholders

The main issues that were discussed within the focus group session are divided into the following topics: contributions from stakeholders; general discussions by participants; and discussions concerning specific themes such as families, children's perspectives, employers, connections between childcare and eldercare, migration and care. Finally there was also some discussion on methodological aspects.

Stakeholders' contributions:

Rada Elenkova from the *Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation* focussed in her statement on gender equality and families. According to her, sufficient research on the dynamics that take place within families does not yet exist. In particular, research should highlight unequal gendered power relations within the family and gender hierarchies that spread over different spheres of life. Without understanding and changing gender inequalities within the family, it is not possible to reach gender equality in the society. Attention should in particular be put on domestic violence: it should be seen as gender-based and as a public concern, not anymore as a private family affair. According to this expert, attaining gender equality requires a reform in values and stereotypes about gender roles as well as in the general social organisation of society. It was also stressed that although there are many programs

of prevention and protection against victims of domestic violence all over the Europe there are still no common standards within EU concerning domestic violence. Social policies are considered to be crucial in order to promote the coordination between all the actors involved in the process of implementation of the law; awareness public campaigns, psychological support services and specific protection measures such as shelters were also mentioned as important policy measures in order to approach and protect victims of domestic violence.

Agata D'Addato from *Eurochild* was concerned about the wellbeing of children and young people because there have been dramatic increases in inequality across the EU bringing greater marginalisation and pockets of disadvantaged communities. While the current economic crisis is plunging more families into poverty, governments are slashing budgets and preventive and supportive services are under threat. As a consequence, a major problem is that of children and young people ending up in child protection and criminal justice systems. According to *Eurochild*, governments should instead invest in high quality prevention and early intervention and secure access to adequate services, including child and health care, and increase training and professional recognition of people working in the service and care sector. Childcare services must be designed on the basis of children's needs including children's right to family life, right to play and leisure and right to education – and research should support the development of high quality and affordable services with universal access, especially for children in need of special support.

In her statement, Ada Carriga Cots from the *International Federation for Family Development* emphasised that families should be able to make choices, they have the prior right to choose what kind of education they want to give to their children, and whether to choose if they want to care for their family members independently of age. For example, in Spain maternity leave is very short (only four months) and childcare services are limited and due to the lack of childcare, some parents are forced to stay at home. In comparison, Nordic-style childcare services make a balance more possible and the French system offers many opportunities as well. All in all, more flexibility and choice are needed within both childcare and eldercare services.

Sabrina Stula from the *Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments in Europe* brought forward in her statement that due to ageing, there is a growing demand for family support services (cleaning, cooking, etc.). The choice of families concerning social care arrangements depends on several factors such as existing formal care services, social networks and organisational cultures (employer perspective). In Europe there are huge national differences in the use of these services and too little comparative analysis; one of the barriers is the financial resources of families. Moreover, she stated that the links between migration and care are one of the main future challenges in the domain of social services. As a consequence, issues such as the qualifications and working conditions of migrant care workers ought to be

studied. Additionally, the barriers that older people with a migrant background and/or with the Alzheimer's disease face in accessing care services also require more attention on the part of research.

General discussions:

The importance of coordination and cooperation between different services

"*Solutions of support systems need to cooperate in order to provide holistic integrated services so that they are able to respond in a multidimensional way*".

Childcare policies seem to be following a general trend in most European countries.

"*The increase of childcare coverage; leave arrangements for fathers and mothers after childbirth and when children are ill*"; "*interconnections between childcare policies and gender equality policies*".

Defamilialisation and familialisation of care:

How can we address social work/social care and public services in order to strength families and keep them together? Who is giving the care and what is the crucial question for European countries: "*there still exists a dual system of care: either family members are cared for within the family at home by the mother or by a middle aged female who has given up her their professional work for almost nothing in terms of financial compensation, or the care is done in the institution where the family cannot be; however there is a third option which is missing: a kind of an intermediate care arrangement between the latter two: a home care worker, or an institution for some hours of the day or some days of the week*".

It was pointed out that there should be more research on this mixed solution: "*the perspective of the care receiver (e.g. being an adult or a child is important because whose voice is actually heard? For example, when we promote national care policies whose voice is heard? Is it empowerment of users or is it empowerment of professionals or care workers?*"

What will happen to informal care in the near future? To what extent should informal care be regulated by the state? Providing knowledge, compensation, etc.

It was stated that informal care is the major source of care and that informal care is one of the central questions concerning care policies. One crucial question raised in the discussion was "*what happens to informal care? Will there be less informal care in the future?*"

The discussion also pointed out that if, on the one hand, informal care is important, since it allows families to stay together, on the other hand we do not know to what

extent these families have the knowledge and skills to care. It was also stated that "*the best care is given within the family but also the worst*", thereby raising the question of how to control what happens in informal care within the family, in particular in the case of abuse in care relations: how to intervene?

Policies do impact on families.

"*If we look at public expenditure on families and children as a parcel of GDP we see that there are countries who have invested more money in childcare and others who invest less; if the government invests a lot of money in children and families (as the Nordic countries did in the 60s and 70s through child allowances and different types of benefits paid to families) this will have an outcome in the long term; for example, child poverty is very low in Nordic countries…); in the long run care policies and special childcare policies impact on the well being of families and children… How to study this? Doing longitudinal comparisons of the countries…*"

How to monitor and compare the quality of childcare services across European countries?

The availability of services is important but their quality is as important. However there is little data in European databases: "*if you want to do a critical comparison of childcare and look at differences and outcomes across European countries what you get out from EU data bases is coverage rates and maybe how many people are working per one child. This data is too limited; there is a huge need for more detailed data in order to compare quality of childcare and to identify the reasons for the different outcomes…*"

The impact of access and the use of social services on the reduction of inequalities in society; how does it impact on reducing poverty? To what extent are the available services reaching out to the most vulnerable groups?

Participants pointed out that there are new types of inequalities; there are vulnerable groups, vulnerable consumers and vulnerable managers of the complex policy care system, not only because of the lack of money or due to the traditional criteria associated with social class but also due to "*lack of knowledge or lack of language skills, specially when there are a lot of people suffering from memory diseases*". The importance of understanding the interconnections between care and social capital was also emphasised.

On the other hand, a question was raised on the social value of childcare provision. According to this view childcare services might have a role in "*achieving social cohesion and fundamental social democratic goals – making gender equality opportunities a reality, eliminating poverty, maximising life chances of all children irrespective of the parent's socio-economic background, concerning the importance of high quality access and affordability of childcare services*". Therefore the

contribution that early childcare services might have in breaking cycles of family deprivation, reducing inequalities and combating discrimination was also stressed. Furthermore the case of ethnic minority children was also mentioned, particularly *"those whose native language is not the home country's language benefit enormously from early childcare since they can get a start in language learning and improve their chances of integrating later on at school and within their communities"*.

Families' perspective of care…

"It is very important to look at care from the perspective of families and households": the discussion focussed on the issue of providing families with all the necessary conditions for making choices, considering not only those who are in the labour market but also those who are not in labour market. Are families free to choose between full-time and part-time employment as well as between types of care services? And do they wish to use formal childcare? Are there universal non-stigmatising childcare provisions available? It was recognised that time poverty is a major issue for many families: *"What does the shift from welfare government to welfare governance mean?"* and *"what is the role of the family in the shifting?"*

Children's perspective…

In the debate it was pointed out that there is an urgent need for research to focus more on children's perspectives and therefore also on their psychological and educational needs. It was also stated that the needs/interests of children are sometimes different from their parents' interests: *"what the children are saying and what the adults are saying is not the same, good services may not be what children want"*.

Employers …

The attitudes of employers were considered to be vital: if they are against female/maternal employment, then public policy measures like childcare and parental leave provisions are not sufficient to bring changes.

Employers' interests influence flexible working arrangements, and nowadays there is a need to promote more worker-friendly/family-friendly flexibility. *"Why should employers invest in family-friendly measures? The social responsibility of employers and private businesses needs to be brought back but there is also clear research evidence that proves that family-friendliness brings employers different economic benefits"*.

Connections between childcare and eldercare.

Interlinks between elderly care and childcare policies - and research - are often missing as they are administratively separated from each other; a life-course perspective is needed in policy and research. It was considered by participants that there are almost no reconciliation measures/studies on the family carers of older people. There are tensions and contradictions between informal and formal economy/work as well as between childcare and eldercare and these need to be brought up by research; "*childcare seems to have a different status in comparison with elderly care*"; "*there are no special European wide leave arrangements for the care of older people as there are in the area of parental leave…*"

Migration and care.

"*Migration and transnational care will be crucial for policy and research in the future*".

"*Policy should take into account that different migrant groups have different needs*".

"*Children who are left behind in the country of origin are in a very difficult situation; reunification of families is also an issue for care policy*".

Methodological issues

- Wider selection of the countries and coverage is needed (especially new EU countries);

- Research on what kind of harmonised data is needed for EU data base;

- International harmonisation of data may on the other hand risk losing 'the real life' in both the North and the South → qualitative comparative and local studies can give significant in-depth perspectives even if the whole Europe is not always covered;

- There is a need for both small-scale and large-scale comparisons.

Major gaps and challenges for research

- More comparative research on leave arrangements, on state policies in this field and on company level policies in companies at a European level, childcare and elderly care;

- More studies on informal care, including spousal care, mother and father care, different types of care in family relations;

- More research on organisational cultures and the employers perspective on care (example of the project "Working Better"[1]);

- Research on how men are discriminated in the labour market if they have to care for dependent relatives (elderly but also children);

- There is more information on friendly family company measures concerning childcare but not so much information on elderly care friendly company measures;

- More comparative research on what the future generations are expecting from public care services to support their long term last stage of the life cycle? How are they planning to consume social services?;

- Research on young people's opinion about the elderly;

- More research is needed on inequalities regarding social care infrastructure – looking at the developments at the global and regional levels;

- Looking at the impact of accessing and using social services on inequalities in society; how does it impact on reducing poverty?;

- The importance of integrating the views of beneficiaries in research on care; the perspective of people in need of care/care receivers is still mainly missing (including children's perspective); qualitative comparative research is very useful and the best methodology to approach people's points of view and to explore the ways people are experiencing care;

- Family as a subject of care and not only as an object of care – is there research on this double dimension?;

- There is a need for studies on new forms of dialogue between the generations (especially in cases of people who do not have grandparents in their own families…);

- More research on the internationalisation of care and the different forms it takes (relations between care, gender and migration issues; global care chains and transnational care; different strategies people have to develop in order to care for relatives living in other country or continent; caring as an international business; care needs of migrant families; migrants as 'gray labour' in home based care and formal care services);

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[1] See http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/key-projects/working-better/

- More research is needed on the dynamics (tensions and contradictions) of the changing relationship between formal and informal (family based) care, and of changes in public policies over time (in-depth analysis of policy formation and the delivery process);

- There is not enough data on care workers in private houses and we do not know enough about them, etc.;

- There is very little research on children who receive institutional/foster care imposed by the government; experiences of countries, different solutions;

- There is a need for more research on international adoption;

- There is a lack of research on children whose parents are not taking care of the them anymore, for example, children whose parents are in prison/with mental illness;

- Likewise research is scarce on children who lived in institutional care and return home; as well as on parents' skills to receive their children;

- Research on the best childcare solutions from the point of view of the child's interests and wellbeing; what are the best care arrangements to fit children's needs;

- Research is still scarce on the use of technology both in formal and informal care;

- Existing research concentrates on care for children and older people: care needs of other adult family members (e.g. people with disabilities) is missing;

- Quality (and not only quantity and availability) of formal care services should be studied more.

Key policy issues

- The 'caring society': how should we develop a political strategy to promote policies related to caring?;

- There is a need to evaluate policies in order to get to know to what extent available services are reaching out to the most vulnerable groups;

- Policy should recognise and address the diverse life situations of the elderly;

- Ageing policies should be more interconnected with family policies instead of being two different domains and not connected at global policy level;

- Regarding the cross-border recruiting of care personnel there is a challenge for policies with respect to organising social care legally and ensuring framework conditions for good work in this sector;

- Governments must invest in universal early childhood services coupled with additional resources and support for families from disadvantaged backgrounds;

- Care policies should provide holistic services to families, a coherent, integrated and multidimensional policy approach in which care provision and leave facilities are matched with better working time arrangements in full time employment and more flexibility for workers without neglecting the best interest of the child (labour market polices, care facilities and other family support, flexible work arrangements, parental leave as well as role of taxes and benefits systems, etc.);

- Policies should encourage more social responsibility of companies; privately provided and funded care services including a move towards 'direct payments' or 'personal budgets' have been largely ignored (even if their importance seem to be growing).

Existential Field 7 – *Social inequality and diversity of families*

Chair:

Karin Wall, ICS University of Lisbon and João Peixoto, ISEG, Technical University of Lisbon

Keynote speakers/initial discussants:

Claudine Attias-Donfut, CNAV, France

M. Dores Guerreiro, ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon

Rapporteur:

Ceridwen Roberts, University of Oxford

Stakeholders/other participants:

Cinzia Sechi, European Trade Union Confederation

Clem Henricson, Family and Parenting Institute

Eric Widmer, University of Geneva

Heloísa Perista, CESIS, Portugal

Ilona Ostner, Georg-August University Göttingen

Isabel Dias, University of Porto, Portugal

James O'Brien, Westlink Consulting

Jana Jamborová, New Women for Europe

Jean Kellerhals, University of Géneve

João Peixoto, ISEG, Technical University of Lisbon

John Hebo Nielsen, Joint Council of Child Issues

Kaija Turkki, University of Helsinki and International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE)

Liliane Leroy,   FPS/COFACE

Manuel Carlos Silva, University of Minho, Portugal

Shirley Dex, Institute of Education, University of London

Tobias Teuscher, Centre de Théorie Politique ULB

Organisation of the workshop and keynote speeches

The session began with a presentation by Karin Wall, leader of Existential Field 7, on the report which summarises the state of the art of research on "*social inequality and diversity of families*". Her presentation highlighted the main results in terms of major trends and major research gaps in the four fields of analysis included in the general subject of "*social inequalities and diversity of families*": migration, poverty, family violence and social inequalities of families.

Following this presentation there was a brief discussion which was also enriched by two other presentations from experts as well as by the statements presented by the stakeholders who participated in this session[2]:

Claudine Attias-Donfut presented a keynote speech on "*the social destiny of children of immigrant families – unchaining generations*". She was based on the results of a research on intergenerational relations among immigrants. This study covered several dimensions (family structures, living conditions, cultural norms, solidarities and conflicts) and directions (parents-children; parents-their own parents). She addressed three main questions: 1 - Are inequalities in educational performance mainly determined by the socio-economic conditions of the families in the country of immigration?; 2 - Is there any influence of the social milieu of origin (in the birth country)? 3 - Do ethnic origins (birth country) play a role? She mainly concluded that: family socioeconomic conditions and the neighbourhood are more determinant than the country of origin; the parents social milieu of origin is more determinant than 'ethnicity' or country of origin; there is a better performance and less problems among immigrants' daughters; only a small minority of immigrants have serious problems; the majority of children are on the path to success.

Maria das Dores Guerreiro (ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon) made a presentation on "*social inequalities and employment patterns*". She highlighted some main results from two surveys - *Quality of life in a changing Europe*[3] and *International European Values Survey*[4] - regarding several comparisons between European countries on peoples' overall work and life satisfaction. She mainly referred to variations across countries, activity sector, occupations, social class and gender. For example, countries where women and men spend more time in paid work have less work and family life satisfaction. On the other hand, countries where people have a higher feeling of job insecurity also show low degrees of life satisfaction.

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2 Collette Fagan was unable to be present, though she sent us her presentation, notes and power point.

[3] See http://www.projectquality.org/

[4] See http://www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu/

The main idea stressed by Maria das Dores is that there are several factors determining family stress such as: sex, marital status, age, having children at home, number of hours in paid and in unpaid work, sense of workload, occupation, cultural values, etc. It is important to take into account all these factors when trying to understand how families combine family and work and how they feel about it.

On the other hand, she also emphasised that inequality in terms of families wellbeing may also be caused by families' internal configurations such as: the age of family members, the care needs they have, the way paid and unpaid work is organised, etc. According to Maria das Dores Guerreiro, there are specific groups which are still understudied: unemployed families, families affected by health problems (physical or mental disabilities), families whose children have been taken into foster care; "*all these families are known as dysfunctional families but very little is known about their configurations, work life balance, support networks, children's socialisation process*".

A major question is: how are policies supporting families not only in respect to financial resources but also in terms of skills and empowerment they need?

Main Discussions and Contributions from Stakeholders

The experts' presentations and the contributions by stakeholders underlined several key questions which were discussed by the group. The following topics summarise the debate within this focus group:

Topic 1 - *Social inequalities*

How unequal are European societies?

"*Social inequalities deriving from the unequal distribution of different resources - economic, social, educational, cultural…- continue to impact strongly on family forms and dynamics, affecting families' opportunities and access to economic wellbeing; several cross-national studies have shown the impact of the unequal distribution of resources on the way families balance the different spheres of their life: private life, working life, civic participation and leisure activities as well as on their perceptions of the quality of life and their feelings of life satisfaction…*"

"H*owever there is a lack of studies connecting social inequalities and family life, both at national level and particularly at cross national level; in the major databases - the European social survey, the ISSP - a lot of data has been examined in terms of gender equality across European societies but social inequality and the linkages between*

social inequality and families have not been studied across different European societies".

The coexistence of old and new patterns of social inequalities in families…

"Research points to two different directions: on the one hand social inequalities in family life seem to follow old and more traditional patterns of social inequality which are well-known and often highlighted by research: for example, in the working classes gender roles tend to be more traditional; family backgrounds, lifestyles and families' resources available to children tend to affect children's daily lives and their life chances…"

"However, on the other hand, these old patterns can coexist with the emergence of new patterns linking social inequalities and family life which need further research: for example: a) the relation between social inequality and social homogamy, which continues to be a strong trend; b) the differences between dual earner couples and male bread winner couples: highly qualified dual earner couples tend to be able to accumulate advantages and increasingly interesting opportunities while male bread winner couples have more difficulties c) we are quite used to the trend according to which high class families spend more time helping their children with homework while low class families spend less time doing homework, but in fact what recent research seems to show is that both low class and high class parents spend the same amount of time helping their children with home work… so this has changed. Nevertheless high class families bring in a difference through other types of support that they give to children…this is not being properly researched at present…"

How is social inequality produced and reproduced in families? Are policy and research only looking at the effects of social inequality or are they also trying to deal with the origins of social inequality?

"Families reproduce social inequality both materially and culturally, both in the short term and intergenerationally; the origins (and not only the effects) of social inequality also have to be understood inside families as a key to understanding the relative position of families and families at risk of failing".

"The fact that research has been channelled into looking at poor families has taken the spotlight away from how social inequalities are being produced and reproduced in families in general in European societies; this may have something to do with the welfare state and with the fact that the welfare state has less resources and wants to look at poor families, thereby forgetting this major issue of what's happening in terms of social inequality…"

"Researchers have moved away from the issue of social inequality and family life during the last few decades, and the focus has been much more on paradigms highlighting the concepts of agency, individualisation, choice and individual diversity

(…) *class analysis seems to be not so useful anymore….In democratic and individualised societies individuals and families have more options, they construct their families and their biographies with more freedom and opportunities; however class is probably still useful… or is social class an anachronistic concept?"*

"*Research can help family policies to improve their understanding, first of the implications of social inequalities between families for policy making, and secondly of the impact/effects of current policies on social inequalities between families, in other words how polices are actually shaping social inequalities between families; for example many European welfare states have been investing in more pre-schools and in day care for very young children considering it as an important help to build up children's life chances. But is this true? Has this really decreased social inequality within families in those countries or not? For example, is early childcare (below age three) a major tool for decreasing social inequalities across families?"*

"*Comparative research shows that variations in state policies have a significant impact on inequalities in family life*".

"*Better-off families still benefit disproportionately from universal services; this presents particular challenges for policy design if the policy goal is to target proportionately more resources at the lowest income households*".

Cumulative dimensions of social inequalities.

"*There are signs that there are cumulative processes occurring in individual lives: e.g. disabled people are more likely to be victims of rape; migrants have more probability to belong to a lower class; the fact of belonging to a minor group might be related with being more likely to be in a poor condition in other dimensions later on in life...*"

How to look again at social inequality in Europe? Are there sufficient and effective indicators in international data bases for measuring social inequalities? Is social class an anachronistic concept?

"*The focus on income levels giving an insight into poor families and underclass families is important but does not explore inequality between social categories and how these affect family life*".

"*International databases have focussed on classical indicators; we need to go beyond those classical indicators; if we only have indicators showing that European societies are unequal from the point of view of income (GDP) we don't really know how social inequality is being produced…we need to consider cultural indicators and not only material and economic ones…*"

"*The report should put greater emphasis on capitalism and social class; capitalism is crucial to understand this problem of social inequality; social inequality must be seen*

as a result of the appropriation of resources (economic, political, social, cultural resources) by social groups. If you don't analyse the social structure you don't go to the problem… Structural constraints are very important".

"*The structure of employment is the major driver of class inequalities*".

"*Class is still an important explanatory variable – it emphasises the structural constraints in which families live (this is often ignored by analysis which emphasises individual agency, choice, etc.)*".

The analysis of inequalities is still centred on certain types of families

"*A subject like this - social inequalities and diversity of families - should include a broader spectrum of diversity of families; for example, family reunion is more difficult or even not possible when considering joint children of homosexual families; same sex families are also discriminated; gender pay gap is higher in female-female families…*"

Methodological issues

- More research is needed on the best measures to be used when describing social inequalities between families; the need for more diverse and interesting indicators in order to catch up and describe the different social situations of families:

  "*It is not enough to look at income and occupational status in order to identify different social classes; there is also a need to look at education, living conditions, housing, cultural indicators, social mobility…*"

  "*The importance of social class analysis which adopts a more pluralistic and interactive approach*".

Major gaps and challenges for research

- There is very little research on new patterns of social inequalities in families as well as on new forms of producing inequality: some family forms and dynamics are not at all related to class and others are very strongly related to class;

- Need to know more about the cumulative dimensions of social inequalities in order to understand the processes of cumulative disadvantages that affect specific categories of people…disabled, immigrant, minorities;

- There is a need for national and cross national research on the complex connections between social inequality and family life; the importance of looking at social inequalities and:

- Households and family configurations

- Family interactions and trajectories

- Rates of family dissolution (divorce, cohabitation exits)

- Family and conjugal divisions of labour

- Family formation and homogamy

- Patterns of fathering and mothering

- Resources flows (income, informal care…) between the generations

- More refined income measures (including pensions and savings…)

- Housing quality + quality of local environment

- Patterns of socialisation and linkages to the schooling system

- Work/family balance and stress

- Geographical mobility of families

- Social mobility chances across generations

- Inequalities of cultural and social capital

- Family networks

- The processes whereby families produce and reproduce material/social/cultural advantage and disadvantage (the role of intergenerational resources flows…)

- The impact of family on the unequal life chances for children

- Cross national case studies that analyse how families are transmitting and reproducing inequality and improving their children's life chances

- The way low and middle class families use the welfare state and the whole range of activities to transmit advantages to their children

- Need for more cross national studies in order to have more comparable data on:

  - Families out of the labour market: unemployed, retired, sick

- Families affected by health problems, physical or mental disability or some kind of addiction; Families whose children have be taken into institutional care, families labelled as families at risk

- Very little is known (cross national studies) about their configuration, age of family members, forms of interaction, organisation of paid work, their support networks, children's socialisation processes, organisation of paid and unpaid work, the way they balance different spheres of life…

- Research does not sufficiently cover the diversity of families with regard to lesbian and gay families experiences: need for more research on gender pay gap in lesbian families as well as on other dimensions of family life usually studied for families in general.

Key policy issues

- More research on policies which seek to reduce social inequality – the impact of cash benefit policies; the impact of policies in producing and improving skills, etc.;

- Policies to support children in early childcare and pre-schools are recent in some countries. To what extent have childcare and pre-school policies helped to decrease social inequalities in children's life chances?;

- It would be useful to have smaller comparative research projects trying to match cases across 5 or 6 European countries in order to go more in depth into the policy context and its effect on what goes on in those countries.

Topic 2 – *Migration*

The big challenge migration represents for Europe: to families, to research, to policies:

"*Migrant flows to Europe (as well as inside Europe) continue to be significant with dual opportunities in the labour market (highly and low skilled) as well as more diversity in family migration: feminisation of migration and new types of family migration are emerging (e.g. women first migration as heads of households); the proportion of foreign born as well the proportion of mixed born (couples with different nationalities) will increase over the next years, thus representing a major challenge for families (for example, the need for families to negotiate cultural differences within schools and in local communities) as well for policies (e.g. educational system) and for research; there has not been enough research on how European societies are going to deal with this…*"

Policies and attitudes for family reunion are becoming more restrictive: how is this going to affect immigrant families and their integration in the different European countries?

"In a context of restrictions regarding family reunion and considering the emergence of new patterns of family migration (e.g. feminisation of migration and mixed marriages): what happens if we have more and more couples who come into Europe and leave their children behind, in South America, in Africa? What does this mean from the point of view of parenting; from the point of view of integration in the host society?"

Is there any reason to relate immigration, violence, poverty?

"Migration issues are frequently connected with negative dimensions of the labour market such as low skilled, less well paid and less interesting jobs, atypical and long hour time schedules, higher risk of exposure to poverty and unemployment, fragile family networks and its consequences in terms of reconciling work and family life, especially for lone parent families; however there is a need to also include positive impacts of migration for the individual, because migration can be also associated with social mobility as well as with positive impacts for the community because communities may become more open by experiencing contacts with people from different cultures".

The increasing importance of the concept of 'mobile families' – the need to consider all types of mobility:

"Considering the equation between migration and mobility, there are other types of mobility that should be taken into account in order to understand families... e.g. long distance relationships, seasonal workers, people who spend like 60 nights out of home per year, short term mobility..."

The perspective of mobility and reconciliation between work and family life…

"Mobile families might experience social isolation from kinship (as Jean Kellerhals said in his intervention in the plenary session); mobile families might have major problems in reconciling work and family life: caring for young children in the host country while caring at distance for children and other older relatives who were left behind in the sending country; how does this affect integration…"

Mobile families and transnational care:

"An issue that has recently emerged on the research agenda is related to the feminisation of migration for the care sector - the complexity of caring relationships and the 'transnationalisation' of globalisation of care - the difficulties of taking care

of children who are left behind as well as of other relatives who are also left behind in the home country…"

Mobility and transnational families:

"How are these cultural differences negotiated in schools, within families and in society in general (mixed marriages, for example)?"

Mobility as a sense of Europe…

"The concept of mobile families illustrates a kind of a European sense of family…"

Mobility and the gender equality perspective…

"The link between the concept of 'mobile families' and the processes of internal mobility within European Union from a gender perspective: mobile families impact not only on working class families but also on middle and upper class families, particularly those who have high skilled occupations, for example people involved in science careers. There is a high expectation of mobility regarding these women and men involved in highly skilled occupations, however the ability to go abroad for a longer period is also largely related to the different ability men and women have to cope with the demands of career progression".

Mobility and the life course perspective…

"Would it be interesting to include the life course perspective when studying mobility because mobility seems to happen in specific life stages and does not have similar consequences for individuals and families whether it happens before or after having children".

What is the social destiny of children of immigrant families? Migrants from outside EU countries face a greater risk of poverty, low integration and social mobility…

"The importance of neighbour and family networks; this is major challenge from the point of view of the integration of second and third generation of immigrants".

"There is a need for more research on the processes of social mobility and the educational success of children of immigrant families who have attended crèches and preschool… are they doing better than previous generations…?"

Methodological issues

- Research is still scarce on migrant families – there are very few in-depth longitudinal or cross national studies on immigrant related families (e. g the experience of poverty, illegality, problems on the work-life balance, impact of family and social networks in immigrants' integration, spatial mobility and

accessibility to educational resources and health care systems, relation between spatial segregation and integration; the reasons and outcomes of attachment to their original language);

- There is a huge need for more complete and comparative data: methodology, concepts and sources always differ largely among European countries; need for harmonisation of migration statistics;

- The importance of special data sets in order to study migrant populations and their spatial concentration as well as comparative data of migration across Europe in order to get a European perspective.

Major gaps and challenges for research

- Need to move beyond narrow economic approaches which often prevailed in immigration studies and to bring in new approaches and variables to understand the diversity of strategies of immigrant families/mobile families (focus on changing forms and (re-) composition of the family, diverse strategies in course of migration, gendered composition, the position of specific members of the family such as children and the elderly…);

- European case-studies of international family migration tend to assume traditional paradigms of family organisation - the nuclear family above all - and have not fully explored the variety of family and households types which derive from home-country settings; there is a need to rethink the concept of families (male bread winner versus many different types and forms of migrant families);

- It is also important to focus on changes within the family resulting from immigration; new types of family forms and organisation of gender roles (e.g. conflicts about women's roles, eventual changes in the construction of masculinity which may affect both immigrant and non-immigrant populations;

- Further research on transnational families: the impacts of national and cultural combinations on relationships, men's, women's and children's lives, host countries attitudes; EU citizens travelling, studying and working abroad, etc.);

- Studies on students' migration are very recent and fast growing (social status, mobility and immigrant policies);

- Need for research on mobile families according to a broader perspective of several types of mobility (see discussion);

- More research on the processes of social mobility of children of migrant families; there is no data comparing cohorts of migrant children attending childcare in order to evaluate their social mobility;

- Little is known about undocumented immigrants or asylum seekers, those who are 'below the radar'; there is a need to improve the possibility of reaching out to this group; data on illegal immigration; also need for further studies on the aspects of health and social insurance of these immigrants…as well as on the impact of irregular immigrants' conditions on their children's life chances;

- Studies on retirement migration from healthy Northwestern Europeans to Southern Europe; but also within each European country because more immigrant people will get older in the host countries and there are no studies on this;

- There is still little knowledge on how cultural differences are being negotiated; how are the host societies responding to increased levels of immigration; how are national families dealing with these flows of migration; what's going on in the schools;

- The need for more research on the impact of highly skilled mobility on family life (gender and work-life balance);

- The effects of (limited) political participation on immigrants' integration and a deeper analysis of the reasons why naturalisation and dual citizenship are used (or not) by immigrants and their offspring;

- It is crucial to explore the positive aspects of immigration for families and individuals; more research on 'successful stories';

- More understanding of immigrants' entrepreneurship and related ethnic economy benefiting from their ethnic and social networks and transnational ties;

- More research on immigrants' fertility behavior; very little is known about the differences between groups, or countries, if they are due to ethnic or cultural factors, or socioeconomic or sociopolitical factors.

Key policy issues

- The impact of legislation on family reunion on family life (consequences of recent policy restrictions for family reunification, family formation channels, immigrants' strategies of settlement, integration and participation, the use of irregular channels by family members);

- Policies to support children in early childcare and pre-schools are recent. "*Do immigrant children who have been in crèches, pre-school achieve better results than others?*";

- The effectiveness of public policies regarding the mechanisms to require citizenship.

Topic 3 – *Poverty*

The persistence of poverty in European societies… and the feminisation of poverty

"*How far in each country is there a persistence of poverty over the life course of individuals, of men and women? In 2007 17% of the European were considered to be at risk of poverty… (highly at risk: unemployed; immigrants from outside the EU, children in single parent households, those with low educational levels, elderly women, young adults, children; types of households: single parents, large families, single persons*".

Discussion on the narrow focus of the economic perspective of poverty which uses income as an indicator (LIS and ECHP/SILC).

"*Studies on poverty are based on low income, however other indicators beyond income should be used; income is very rarely articulated with other types of indicators, for example, indicators of living conditions…there is also poverty in Nordic countries if we take into consideration other indicators…*"

Limitations of the statistical approach…

"*The importance of combining both approaches: quantitative and qualitative…*"

How can we get comparability in statistics on poverty in different countries?

"*Same statistics on poverty mean different things in different countries due to different definitions of concepts and their 'operationalisation'*".

The importance of looking at households and not only at categories of people:

"*The individual unit is often used: the child, the elderly person; there is some information on household but it is not enough*".

Poverty over the life course.

"The routes into poverty are hard to get: accident, ill/health, unemployment, divorce, pregnancy, lack of social and family networks… the need for more data on people who get out of poverty, according to different life stages..."

Social Policy and its outcomes. The role of social policy as an incentive and as an opportunity to cut the gap of poverty. The relation of childcare facilities and the prevention of poverty.

"It is important to understand whether family policies include measures to provide families with resources as well other types of skills and not just accumulating cash benefits".

"It is important to cut the gap of poverty for the second generation; the importance of childcare (0-3) for lone mothers, as well as the importance of childcare for children's psychological development…"

Methodological issues

- The need to articulate income with other indicators when measuring poverty: such as deprivation indicators as well as cultural indicators (e.g. not being able to have a birthday party; not being able to participate in society, social life, employed and non employed families, underemployment, living standards, quality of life, possibilities for children, education, feeling and meaning of poverty for people…); see also indicators proposed for measuring social inequality;

- The importance of developing a multi-method approach by supplementing the quantitative and statistical approaches with qualitative approaches and case studies;

- Unit of reference is always the individual (child, elderly person…). Need to reinforce household/family as an important unit of analysis.

Major gaps and challenges for research

- More research on the life trajectories of poor people; the routes into poverty but also the emphasis on the way to go out; life course transitions;

- There are very few broader studies (both quantitative and qualitative) on the experience of poverty as well on the social patterns of poverty;

- Need for more data on the poverty of people who are caring or are cared for by family members;

- More studies on poor people/households in different urban and rural contexts.

Key policy issues

- The impact of early childcare in reducing poverty;

- The importance of social transfers in reducing poverty;

- The way policies give poor people instruments and opportunities (resources as skills and not just accumulating cash policies) to cut the cycle of poverty.

Topic 4 – *Family violence*

Domestic violence continues to be significant.

Several types of family violence were identified: psychological, economic, physical, sexual; it is still largely gender based (conjugal partners) but it also exists between parents and children, adults and elderly parents, boyfriend and girlfriend.

Domestic violence policies and legislation are still recent in many countries (1990's).

At present it is considered as a public crime in several national legislations in order to be on a par with other criminal offences.

Specific groups at risk:

Low income and low educational households, children in large families and in families with alcohol problems, women with higher educational levels than their spouse; unemployed women with employed partner; women in process of separation; pregnant women; immigrant women with precarious legal status; young women seeking abortion.

"*Violence is not only about women. Most of the studies don't take into consideration the fact that also men are victims of violence. Only 20-50% of all the different forms of intimate partner violence are reported to the police, fewer relate to violence against men; men seem to be more reluctant in reporting this violence*".

The problem of violence against disabled persons.

"*About 10 -13% of women with disabilities reported having experienced abuse, a rate similar to that of women without disabilities. For all women, the abuser is often a partner or family member, but women with disabilities are more likely to be abused by health care providers or caretakers*".

Methodological issues

- Lack of quantitative cross-national analysis;

- Important to develop a multi-method approach to research combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies;

- Need for more work on the comparability of indicators and concepts (definitions are still ambiguous and different from country to country) in order to carry out and improve cross-national studies on domestic violence;

- Lack of in-depth analysis using specific targeted samples of social categories/families to understand diverse forms of domestic violence;

Major gaps and challenges for research

- There is practically no research looking at families and violence (family variables/situations that promote violence);

- Very recent and little research looking in depth at families and violence, particularly variables and situations that promote violence; lack of analysis using specific target samples of social categories of families to understand other forms of domestic violence;

- It is important to move beyond the gender unidirectional paradigm predominantly focussed on violence against women and also integrate violence against men;

- There is practically no research on what helps people getting out of the cycle of violence; not only what promotes violence but also the emphasis on what reinforces the way to go out.

Key policy issues

- Since policies and legislation are recent in many countries and most of them have recently considered domestic violence as a public crime, it is very important to study what the impact of this legislation which considers domestic violence as a public crime. Has it had an impact?;

- More research on the effectiveness of laws combined with polices in preventing violence, providing protection, support and services to the victims and criminal justice intervention;

- Dissemination of best practice policies in countries with effective policy models;

- Need for more public awareness campaigns focussed on combating persistence of stereotypes (law enforcement officers as well as special training of various professionals: healthcare professionals, police officers, judges and social welfare offices…);

- Need to improve the approach to victims.

Existential Field 8 – *Family, media, family-education and participation*

Chair:

Sonia Livingstone, London School of Economics

Keynote speakers/initial discussants:

Ann Phoenix, Institute of Education, University of London

Jose A. Simões, New University of Lisbon

Naureen Khan, Commission for Racial Equality, London

Rapporteur:

Ranjana Das, London School of Economics

Stakeholders/other participants:

Elisabeth Potzinger, Katholischer Familienverband Österreich

Eric De Wasch, Gezinsbond - Belgium

Ignacio Socias, The Family Watch

Jeanne Fagnani, CNRS

Katherine Bird, Bundesforum Familie

Linden Farrer, COFACE

Owen James, World Mothers Movement - Europe

Philippa Taylor, CARE

Silvan Agius, ILGA-Europe

Organisation of the workshop and keynote speeches

Sonia Livingston (London School of Economics) opened the focus group by presenting a brief overview of the main findings of the report on Existential Field 8 - *Family, media, family and education* - which is co-authored by herself and Ranjana Das, London School of Economics. After this first presentation the three keynote speakers provided their critical responses regarding the main research gaps and made some suggestions regarding the future research agenda:

Ann Phoenix (Institute of Education, University of London), made a presentation mainly focussed on implications for the family. She began by emphasising the importance of objective (economic factors) and subjective indicators when speaking about and measuring families' wellbeing: "*how people feel about their lives and how they are doing is key* (…) *subjective wellbeing is key to understanding social policy terms on wellbeing*". She continued by reinforcing her agreement on the importance and pertinence of the major trends and findings of the report authored by Sonia Livingston and Ranjana Das and then she focussed on the major gaps of existing research on this field (see major gaps and challenges for research).

José A. Simões (New University of Lisbon) made a critical response focussed on youth cultures research, media and family. He raised some questions: are youth cultures a product of media or is it the other way around? Are youth cultures homogenised or are they diversified? He considered that there is an ambiguous and complex relation that has been analysed but still needs further research, namely: the way in which media plays a part in the construction of youth itself, in the way youth sees itself and in the way young people identify themselves with what comes out from the media. He also stressed that there is a tension between two tendencies: individualisation (e.g. bedroom cultures, mobile phones) and mobility inside the home (media appropriation has a complex relation with space) on the one hand, and togetherness (family socialisation within the media) on the other. An important question for him is: what part does the family still play on media socialisation and on socialisation in general?

Naureen Khan (Commission for Racial Equality, London) tried to focus on stakeholders' perspectives about the future potential of this research, specifically regarding EU policy and legislation. Her focus was on internet, mobile phones and associated technology as well as on the impact that the personalisation of media has on children and in the 'bedroom culture'. Naureen Khan pointed to the need for more research on the positive side of children's internet usages. According to Naureen Khan, research is usually focussed on the risks of children's exposure. She considers that it would be interesting to get to know more on what goes on in the bedroom not only in terms of risks but also in terms of empowering children and their rights to privacy. Based on the report findings, she stated that there is a significant children's usage of internet, therefore it would be interesting to know more about the usage patterns of internet and mobile phones and technologies by

children aged between 6 and 11. She also mentioned the subject of parental mediation: there are various patterns in terms of mediation but is parent's mediation effective? Is that the right angle to focus on in terms of children usages? Shouldn't we know more in terms of children? In terms of future questions for the agenda she considers that there is still a gap or a challenge concerning the importance of knowing more about social networks. She gave the example of Facebook (for example, having thousands of friends in Facebook) and raised the question of "*what does that mean about friendship and relationships; what does that mean for that generation; what impact on development of family?*" Another interesting issue is the next generation parents who will be more aware and confident of technology and how that will impact on their relationship with their children. She ended by emphasising that "*it is important to move away from that risk perspective to be more proactive towards a more positive agenda*". Naureen Khan stated that EU Institutions' approach to internet safety and media and technology, particularly internet and associated technology, is always "*a look in terms of risk perspective and too reactive*"; on the other hand, she considered that although there are several agendas on EU strategies media and use of technology, the impacts of family research is very poorly covered in these strategies; she finally pointed out that it is important to persuade decision makers to carry out more comparative research including the 27 members and not just a few countries.

General Discussion and Contributions from Stakeholders

The discussion around the themes of the safe usages of internet, children's exposure to risks, their internet usages and parents' regulation of children's media's usages (particularly internet and television) dominated the overall debate. The following points summarise the discussion within this focus group:

Risks of children's exposure to internet:

"*New technologies such as Internet, mobile phones and videogames have an enormous potential in a positive as well as negative sense, and therefore, we face new risks and opportunities that need to be identified and studied; how to help parents to develop their educational task at home by knowing both how their children use technology and learning to share that use with them, without abdicating of their role. Is there any research on the effectiveness of different kinds of education that children can receive at school about how to be safe, how to participate on line, how children connect their views and have a voice in participating?*"; "*The challenge is to retain the notion of the child as an agent, but to recognise structure constrained agency at the same time*".

Electronic babysitting…

"Small children's exposure to television" (number of hours of exposure to television; television as a babysitter).

What is it parents feel out of control about?

"Geographical tracking; nurseries on line…"

"The pressure on parents; the need to know where the child is every minute".

"Why is this fear of children going out?"

Media and parenting.

"How can we reach out to parents? How are parents reaching each other? What are parents saying to each other? Where are parents going for advice when they need advice about parenting? They also use internet (more frequently better educated parents); how much research exists on that? How can internet help parent's networks and how are they using it for parenting? Peer support; state support, on line support; which works best? Social and economical differences do make a difference within families…we cannot have a general discourse".

The importance of media in sustaining and shaping ethnic identities and transnational links - the example of global care chains – 'emotional transnationalism'.

The example given referred to Philippine mothers who go to North America to work in households and cannot bring their children but still care for them at a distance using ICT as tools, like speaking and seeing through Skype and MSM (they see them every day, ask them for home work…)

The impact of media in the subjective ideal of wellbeing.

"There is a need for more research on the effects of media, not just the internet but also the effect that TV and the print media, including advertising, can have on shaping adults values in consumer societies, the ideal family type, life-courses, ideal relations with children and within the family, ownership of property versus poverty and inequality; leisure lifestyles, homogenised cultures versus individualism itself; adults are also affected by media and this can have an influence on their children…what is it that we get from ICT in terms of identities and desires projection?"

The media as a cause of all social ills…versus the potential of media in very different dimensions of life…

"Important that the media are seen as neither good nor bad, but rather as a space, or as a resource which shapes all else; shift away from media effects and moral panic

towards understanding the ways in which the media shapes identity, how everyday lives are mediated. For example, how can the media shape the society change towards a more sustainable consumption?"

How can we use new technologies to support family relationships?

"A lot of research is personal orientated; it is difficult to find specific family orientated impact research; what is the media doing in terms of family relations, either supporting or breaking family relationships, this is not yet being researched. The example of online family mediation, courses on parenting, marriage preparation courses, education within the schools in order to enhance family relations. How is the media (all sorts of media) impacting on family relations, both positively and negatively?" "There are lots of ways communication technologies can impact positively on family life…" "Intergenerational interchanges and grandparenting through ICT…"

The impact ICT technologies can have on reconciling work and family life:

"Very big impact on time management; media's use in order to have a harmonised management of time and family relations; is that sufficiently researched?; Are we doing enough proactive work and trying to find the best solutions that can help the families reconciling work and family life?"

"Existing research shows that there is a promise that technologies will allow a better adjustment of work and life balance but in fact it tends to be used as lead by the workplace"; "the work is always there…expectations of going back to work invades domestic space with (…) provision of technologies at home and the encouragement to do it comes from employers more than it comes from those whose first concern is to promote work-life balance, such as family organisations for example…"

Personalisation and togetherness.

"Media consumption being something individualised now, but also the site of sharing as well as disagreements and arguments – the tension between individualisation and togetherness".

Methodological issues

- More comparative and results across and within countries;

- Comparative research still includes few countries; importance of including the 27 members.

Major gaps and challenges for research

- Expand 'the media' to include many other kinds of media – print, television, film, advertising;

- Focus on different types of families;

- There is a need to look more into inter and intra households differences as well as similar patterns; households are the site of reproduction of differences in ICT use by age but also other variables;

- Need to distinguish intra-household and inter-household differences to understand how ICT mediates transnational family lives;

- Impact of new technologies on health, access to health, information about health; the interconnections between the media, ageing and health support services;

- Research more on the process of how knowledge is transferred from the younger generations (who are more able to pick up new things) to older generation in the household;

- Research in order to support decision making and control of the amount of information (multiple messages) people have every second;

- More research on media evaluation programs – the evaluation of the effectiveness of programs of media competence and media literacy (in childcare, pre-schools and schools in general);

- Research is needed on how the media can shape families' attitudes towards a more sustainable consumption (how one member influences the whole behaviour of the family e.g. mothers purchasing decisions);

- More research on the bedroom culture and social networks of children, particularly internet usages among children between 6 and 11 years old;

- There is very little research on the way ICT is used in mediating transnational family lives; studies on transnational, 'glocal' and hybrid identities as mediated need further development;

- The way in which ICT is key to new modes of mothering and parenting for immigrant people - 'global care chains' and 'emotional transnationalism';

- How ICT is used to mediate the making and breaking of relationships;

- Need to refocus research on individuals' media use in terms of implications for family relations;

- Research on adults, not simply as parents but in diverse roles and relationships is needed (e.g. contribution of ICT to help/hinder the work/life balance e.g. via working from home – 'teleworking');

- Important to contextualise how new media reconfigure but may not transform longstanding historical features of families, lifestyles and childhood;

- More research on how media can be a tool in order to help parents in parenthood, on social networks for parents; how are parents using internet and talk to each other? How are they using internet to help them in parenting? How they do advise each other? Support advice for parents in educating their children, etc.;

- More research on specific groups of families like families with either disabled or dependent persons;

- More research on how people incorporate media in their daily life;

- More research on relations between generations within families and not only children and adult relations into children; the idea of taking the family as a unit and not just the individual;

- More research on the role of media in transitional stages in life;

- Research on parent's feelings that they have information needs: which parents, in which contexts, which information needs;

- It is important to research the impact of biased messages carried out by the media on behaviour economics; also in intra and inter households, and between the generations (there are different type of biases that influence children more than the elderly…);

- Also research on how the same message might be received differently by different members of the family;

- Research on the impact of media in financial education, specially connected with the crisis, and the ability people actually have to be able to manage the household budget.

Three priorities for a future agenda

The media as content

More research is needed on how media contents (on 'old' and 'new' platforms) support or undermine family life, childhood and identities, and this should be available to guide parents – recognising a huge information need among parents (the 'sandwich generation').

The media as tool

Diverse media platforms can be and are being used as a tool to reach families and provide information, guidance and advice on diverse issues: what is needed is evaluation research to identify which approaches (messages, platforms, and contexts) are effective.

The media as infrastructure

Almost every dimension of family life - e.g. relationships, identities, health, education, values, work-life balance - is dependent in some way on media and information technologies.

These bring opportunities and risks, and they demand new critical and digital skills.

Recognising this 'environmental' or 'infrastructural' aspect of media requires that media are considered as a part of research projects on diverse aspects of family life.

Key policy issues

- The need to support parents to be able to give guidance to their children in how to use internet and develop correctively their mediating role;

- Which policies are being carried out in the various EU countries with regards to children and families in respect to ICT technologies?;

- European agendas on strategies for ICT should move away from a risk perspective in order to be more proactive towards a more positive agenda;

- More strategies on family, media and internet usages.

Part II – Workshops of Key Policy Issues

(8 sessions, 4 in parallel)

Workshop 1 – Transitions to adulthood

Workshop 2 – Motherhood and fatherhood in Europe

Workshop 3 – Ageing, families and social policy

Workshop 4 – Changes in conjugal life

Workshop 5 - Family relationships and wellbeing

Workshop 6 – Gender equality and families

Workshop 7 – Reconciling work and care for young children: parental leaves

Workshop 8 – Reaching out to families: the role of family associations

Workshop 1 – *Transitions to adulthood*

Chair:

Carmen Leccardi, University of Milan-Bicocca

Keynote speakers/initial discussants:

Barbara Stauber, University of Tübingen

Rapporteur:

Carmen Leccardi, University of Milan-Bicocca

Stakeholders/other participants:

Anna Maria Comito, Coface-handicap and Co.Fa.As.Clelia

Ellu Saar, Institute of International and Social Studies, Tallinn University

Epp Reiska, Institute of International and Social Studies, Tallinn University

Florence von Erb, World Movement of Mothers

Gilles Seraphin, Union Nationale des Associations Familiales

Hana Haskova, Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

Josef Jelínek, Obcanske sdruzeni (ONZ)

Katerina Cadyova, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic

Lea Pulkkinen, University of Jyväskylä

Linden Farrer, COFACE

Margaret O'Brien, University of East Anglia

Maria do Rosário Mckinney, Forum Européen des Femmes (FEF)

Martina Leibovici-Mühlberger, ARGE Erziehungsberatung/Alliance for Childhood

Olga Tóth, Institute of Sociology – HAS

Ranjana Das, London School of Economics

Renata Kaczmarska, United Nations

Organisation of the workshop and keynote speeches

The workshop began with an introductory report by Barbara Stauber, University of Tübingen, focusing on "*Transitions into parenthood, lessons from the expertise for the Family Platform*". According to Barbara Stauber young people's entry into parenthood is strictly interrelated with other aspects of the complex process of transition, in particular the very important transition from school to work. After illustrating the concept of 'biographical transition', she focussed on the new problems that this process might represent for young people, drawing attention to the changes over the last few decades (transitions that are fragmented and de-standardised, reversible and subject to risk and - above all - individualised). Within this framework, the adoption of public policies in support of young parenthood takes on particular importance, interconnecting with the deployment of policies aimed at facilitating the entry of young people into adult life. From a more theoretical perspective, Barbara Stauber stressed the importance of two phenomena with reciprocal tensions: the agency of young people and the concept of capabilities. The first term refers to "*the socially contextualised and temporally embedded ability to decide upon and perform the practices of everyday life*"; the second to "*the availability of opportunities – it is not enough to formally remove inequalities in resources; it is also necessary to actively facilitate access to them, creating real opportunities for (young) people to perceive their rights and transform them into claims*". In summary, the crucial question Barbara Stauber addressed is the importance of highlighting both the capacity of young people to act as protagonists in the processes of change that are taking place today as well as the limits they have to cope with. From this perspective, the tensions between these two poles constitute the framework in which entry paths into adult life and parenthood unfold. Barbara Stauber concluded her presentation by identifying gaps that still persist in research (see major gaps and challenges for research).

After Barbara Stauber's presentation, the discussion was opened to all participants including stakeholders' statements. The following paragraphs summarise the debate and discussion which took place.

General Discussion and Contributions from Stakeholders

The debate was polarised. Some of the participants shared the sociological perspective that considers transition to adulthood (and to parenthood) as a social construction – and, as such, a phenomenon subject to variations on the historical and social level, influenced by political regimes, welfare contexts and so forth. Others, on the other hand, expressed an individual (in the sense of extra-social) vision of the transition, relating it in an exclusive manner to the will of the individual/young person to confront his/her entry into the adult world. This latter perspective was focussed more on the concept of responsibility as an act on the part

of individuals and the crucial marker of transition into adult life. In response to this position it was underlined that the way in which young people create their own cultures and give form to their own ways of life (and worlds) occurs within given social contexts and on the basis of specific (and unequal) economic, social, cultural and family available resources: "*transition to adulthood is a social process which means it does not depend on the individual as a kind of non social human-being*".

The following points were highlighted:

There is a plurality of paths to enter adulthood:

The first issue that was emphasised in reference to the transition to adult life was the pluralisation of its forms and the growing social vulnerability that characterises them. As a recent comparative study (a longitudinal study relating to the transition from school to work in three countries: the UK, Finland and the USA) has highlighted, the speed of transition to adult life is subject to variation. The specific characteristics of these variations need to be studied. More generally, the social and economic climate today, marked by a high level of uncertainty, exercises a negative effect both on the transition to adult life and the transition to parenthood. Here the family of origin plays a major role in supporting young people as well as welfare policies (the example of Finnish welfare policies which assists young people in moving out of their parents' homes was given).

The role of the media in terms of recent available technologies was also mentioned as an important tool young people have for building their own culture, work and autonomy.

Which should be the age for considering in the 21st century a person as an adult?

A second issue that was discussed was age. How should we view age? Should it be considered as an exclusively biological phenomenon or does the meaning of age change in accordance with historical and social contexts? The age at which women have their first child, for example - today in the whole of Europe women have their first child at an increasingly advanced age - constitutes a clear indicator of the influence of social factors over biological ones (also related to the lengthening of the educational process which affects both young people and women). In the course of the debate attention was also drawn to the importance of gender norms tied to age (also in relation to the link between social reality and age).

A question was raised concerning the consequences of these prolonged processes of becoming an adult - the increasing age of having children, the increasing age of having a permanent partner, a permanent job, increasing age of moving out from the parents' home – of all these contextual factors that are becoming more common in shaping the experience of being or not being an adult.

"Definition of adulthood is responsibility", "Responsibility is also potentially a political issue and a social issue" (e.g. taking young parents building up networks and creating new facilities for childcare, responsibility has a high social and political relevance…)

A third very important issue that emerged in the debate was that of responsibility. As mentioned above there was a polarised debate around this issue. A number of participants insisted that it was vitally important to consider the assumption of responsibility - conceived as an act on the part of individuals - as the essential marker of entry into adult life. From this point of view the social conditions under which the transition takes place would appear to be of limited importance *"becoming adult is becoming responsible for the choices; the choice people have to make independently of economical and social conditions"*.

In response there emerged another point of view, shared by other participants, according to which the assumption of responsibility itself - the possibility of conceiving of oneself as a responsible subject - possesses a social and political character. In other words, responsibility too has to be analysed in terms of a social framework and not as a simple act of individual liberty: *"decisions are taking according to resources that people have in their daily life, there are some constraints and opportunities"*.

The issue of responsibility leads directly to that of the relationship between responsibility and the phenomenon of 'duty': although the exercise of responsibility is usually tied to the issue of rights, it is necessary to be aware that responsibility involves another dimension that connects it to the issue of duty. On the other hand emphasis was also laid on the fact that it is extremely important not to consider rights separately from the possibility of actually exercising them – in particular, when one is talking about young people (this issue links back to the question of 'capabilities' mentioned above).

What would be the appropriate policies which enable these transitions into adulthood? Should the state intervene in the process of transitions to adulthood by giving support to personal choices?

There were different views on the role of policies supporting personal choices towards economic independence. A group of participants expressed doubts about the need to promote policies supporting transitions into adulthood. In their view public policies could even turn out to be counterproductive, acting in practice as a substitute for the free exercise of personal responsibility in the face of the tasks involved in transition.

Another group of participants agreed that facilitating transitions is a highly political issue and that all family policy is about these transitions. Two examples were given: one regarding a specific policy in Finland which promotes some autonomy of young people in terms of economic standards *"staying in parents' house at 35 (as in Italy*

and some other countries) or at 22 (as in Finland) is related to policy decisions. In Finland every person who moves out of his/her parents home to study is given a housing allowance which means they move out very early at the age of 18; this gives them a sense of responsibility for being on their own…"

The second example refers to the lack of autonomy women might have in relation to maternity benefits which are still linked and dependent on employment and salary *"policies support moving out from the parents' home but do not support becoming a parent until the person has a permanent job and salary related benefits* (…)*, a person has to be employed in order to get maternity benefits"*.

In general all the participants in the working group were in agreement in underlining the need for a strategic policy towards eligibility to maternity benefit regardless of the economic background of the mother.

Finally it was also underlined by many participants that while social policies *"can support transitions (to adulthood), they cannot design them"*.

How to build intergenerational solidarity?

Regarding intergenerational relations: *"research shows that transfers from older (parents and grandparents) to young are more frequent than from younger to older persons, this dependency may be growing"*; therefore there was a point on the need for more research on this dependency as well as on the impact on the autonomy of young people; research should also take into account cultural differences between and within countries.

Methodological issues

Comparative studies mentioned below (at micro, meso and macro levels) should make use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods and take into consideration the longitudinal dimension as well as the various orientations (and the various strategies) of the public policies already in place or yet to be promoted in terms of the three levels mentioned above.

It is important that sociological research establishes bridges with a psychological perspective: to take into account the impact of structural changes on individuals' personal development and wellbeing.

Major gaps and challenges for research

There is a need for comparative studies at the European level regarding transitions into parenthood. In particular:

- At the micro level: in what way do young people, women and men, negotiate their roles as mothers and fathers and try to reconcile them with their experiences as young people engaged in the transition to adult life;

- At the meso level: what social resources (institutional and informal) are available - and what are the corresponding constraints - to support them in this trajectory;

- At the macro level: it is necessary to take into consideration the different transition regimes at the European level and the different degrees of sensitivity towards the tasks associated with parenthood and, more generally, towards the gender differences involved in the experience of parenthood;

- It is important to carry out further research on the strategies of young parents with reference to gender (gendering and de-gendering strategies): for example, a return to the traditional gender-based division of labour in the couple or, instead, a restructuring of gender roles after becoming parents for the first time;

- There is a need for more analysis about processes of negotiation both within young couples and between generations in the context of transition towards parenthood;

- Also important and needing further research are transitions towards parenthood on the part of young migrants (and, in general, understanding this process in terms of transnational labour markets and the demand for labour);

- There is a need to explore the process of transition to parenthood in conditions of poverty and in the presence of housing problems;

- It was also suggested that it is important to explore dependency interactions between young and older generations as well as their impact on the autonomy of young people; research should also take into account cultural differences between and within countries;

- Expectations and young people's needs - "*subjective expectations and experiences of youth and adulthood - were considered a key question for research since it was stressed that young people today expect difference things from life/society in comparison with what their parents expected before them*".

Key policy issues

In the course of the debate a number of important considerations emerged in relation to policy. These can be summed up as follows:

- The important role that public policy plays in supporting the transition to adulthood? (in the workshop there was a discussion, for example, on the case of Finland);

- In order to support the transition to adulthood, policies have to create concrete opportunities for young people to perceive their rights and transform them into claims;

- Policies that might support young people in their long transition to adulthood are: employment policies; education policies; policies related to participation; policies promoting intergenerational solidarity; policies on gender; policies with regard to time;

- Policies encouraging international participation (e.g. sending youth delegates to participate in congresses and international participation);

- Policies regarding eligible conditions for maternity benefit, making it independent of employment and salary level;

- Policies regarding the avoidance of unwilling pregnancy of teenage girls as well as policies in order to support teenage decisions in this field; what are the policies in place in the various EU countries in this respect? What can the countries learn from each other?

Workshop 2 – *Motherhood and fatherhood in Europe*

<u>Chair</u>:

Kim-Patrick Sabla, Technical University of Dortmund

<u>Keynote speakers/initial discussants</u>:

Margaret O'Brien, University of East Anglia

<u>Rapporteur</u>:

Vanessa Cunha, ICS, University of Lisbon

<u>Stakeholders/Other Participants</u>:

Anne-Claire de Liedekerke, World Mothers Movement – Europe

Daniel Erler, Familienservice GmbH

Dorottya Szikra, Faculty of Social Sciences, Eötvös University

Helena Hiila, The Family Federation of Finland

Ilona Ostner, Georg-August University Göttingen

Jonas Himmelstrand, Haro

Judit Gazsi, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour - Hungary

Julie de Bergeyck, World Movement of Mothers

Karin Jurczyk, German Youth Institute

Katherine Bird, Bundesforum Familie

Lydie Keprova, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs - Czech Republic

Magdalena Kocik, University of Warsaw - Polish Society for Social Policy

Marina Rupp, State Institute of Family Research at the University of Bamberg (ifb)

Nathalie d'Ursel, New Women For Europe

Olaf Kapella, Austrian Institute for Family Research, University of Vienna

Philippa Taylor, CARE

Silvan Agius, ILGA-Europe

Sylvie von Lowis, World Movement of Mothers France

Teppo Kröger, University of Jyväskylä

Tijne Berg- le Clercq, Netherlands Youth Institute

Veronika Ágnes Herche, Demographic Research Institute Budapest

William Lay, COFACE

Zsuzsa Gerber, Hungarian Women's Alliance

Zsuzsa Kormosné Debreceni, National Association of Large Families - Hungary

Organisation of the workshop and keynote speeches

Margaret O'Brien opened the session of this focus group with a presentation on "*Fathers in Europe: the negotiation of caring and earning?*" According to Margaret O'Brien, although there is a long legacy of research on father's work and family reconciliation in European Community, fatherhood has not been a central issue in family policy developments in Europe. She addressed two questions: 1 - To what extent are European fathers becoming more involved in family life? 2 - How can we engage fathers in work and care solutions of the future?

Starting with the first question, Margaret O'Brien presented some quantitative longitudinal data and concluded that European fathers are becoming more involved in family life. In fact, not only they are doing more and sharing more household tasks with their partners, but, and most noteworthy, they are increasingly involved in primary and active caring for small children, promoting (since the middle 1980's) the model of a 'new father' – in other words, a father that besides being the main provider is also a hands-on and a loving one. However there are considerable differences not only between European countries (with the Nordic fathers spending more time in caring), but also within countries, when macro-social variables like educational level, working hours, or even full time/part-time activity of mothers are taken into account.

She also stressed that there are significant and diverse family contexts for becoming a father in contemporary Europe. In fact, fewer men are having children (voluntarily or involuntarily) and when they do, they do it later in life, in a wide range of family formations and sharing the economic responsibility with their partners. This leads us to the second question: how can fathers (as well mothers) work, care for their children and achieve personal wellbeing? According to Margaret O'Brien, the models of contemporary fathers such as the active father, father as nurture, father as care, which have corresponding images on television and advertising, seem to be in contradiction with the father of everyday life in terms of the availability of time to care and to involve oneself in family life: "*this mismatch may be a problem (…) particularly now that we are living times of economic insecurity instability (…) the active father might be contested, men may feel less security in arguing for more time with their children in their working environment*".

As an example of these contradictions between father cultures and the conduct/behaviour of fatherhood she mentioned the fact that in the UK men who are employed for less than 26 weeks in the same workplace are not eligible to take the paternity leave of 15 days which exists since 2003.

Given the fact that Infant and child care is no longer a private 'mother only' family matter and that governments are becoming more involved in developing policies towards work and family reconciliation, Margaret O'Brien emphasised what she considers as a key policy issue: policies that promote choices and give parents

freedom to choose between the available leave arrangements; if the parental leave is not well paid or difficult to take, it does not become a real option.

In conclusion Margaret O'Brien's presentation emphasised that there should be a connection between policies, labour market perspectives (employers) and fathers' and mothers' wishes in order to find creative ways that include fathers and not only mothers in the care for children.

After Margaret O'Brien's keynote speech there was an open debate with all the participants expressing their views on the general topic of motherhood and fatherhood in Europe. The main views of participants as well as the main contributions from stakeholders in terms of their written statements were also taken into account in the overall summary that follows.

General Discussion and Contributions from Stakeholders

The discussion was very lively and focussed on the subject of politicising fatherhood and motherhood. Participants' positions were polarised around two different perspectives regarding two major recent trends in the EU: the regulation of early childhood through childcare services and leave policies in straight connection with gender equality as the mainstream.

In fact, the inclusion, in the political agenda, of tools seeking to bring men more closely into childcare is seen, for some participants, as essential in order to accomplish gender equality in work life and family life; for others, it can be seen as a dangerous social engineering which challenges the natural bonds and expertise within the family. However it is important to notice that both perspectives underlined the wellbeing of children as the major reference point.

The following topics summarise the debate and discussion:

Gender inequalities still persist regarding childcare.

"*As economic providers, mothers and fathers are becoming more equal; in childcare, inequality remains pronounced. How to 'equalise' the social and economic rights of women and men as parents (and bearing in mind the interests of the child)?*" This question is considered to be a challenge for welfare states: "*fathers should be encouraged to do more housework and care and mothers should also be encouraged to let fathers do so*".

What are the political drivers (both at local or national level) that might have an influence on the promotion of fatherhood or motherhood or on the changing roles of fathers and mothers?

Concerning the drivers for more engagement of fathers in childcare, major research trends reveal that there are several macro and micro variables that might promote more involvement of fathers in caring for their children, namely education levels ("*highly educated men are more likely to spend more time with their kids*"); employment patterns, for example, full-time employment of mothers ("*there is a link between mothers employment and men's care time*") and men's working hours ("*the more paid work men do less time they spend with their children*"; "*although men's working hours are declining in Europe fathers work more hours in comparison with men without children*"); level of payment when taking paternity and parental leave: "*men take leave when there is a high level of replacement*".

However the importance of getting to know more about men's wishes regarding the reconciliation of work and family life was also mentioned: "*we know about the amount of time men and women spend with their children (fathers involvement in unpaid work – childcare, core domestic and non-routine domestic work - has increased) but we know less about what they feel about that time, their satisfaction, negotiations that happen in the home…*"

How much social engineering do we accept in order to achieve gender equality? Nature and biology versus polices of social engineering.

Some participants expressed the view that policies can try to implement a kind of 'social engineering' which aims to promote the same amount of equality for both men and women regarding childcare. This was considered as 'de-maternalising childhood'; it was considered that achieving complete gender equality might not always be in relation to the best interest of the child. The example of breastfeeding was mentioned: "*you cannot replace the mother by the father if you are breastfeeding your child*". It was also argued that there are natural bond between mothers and their children and that fathers are not as needed in the first years of a child's life as mothers are: "*mothers feel the needs of a child better than fathers*".

Another example that was very much discussed was a proposal which seems to be currently under discussion in Sweden concerning the division of the 16 months of well paid parental leave in equal and non transferable shares for each parent: "*what is in question is the right of mothers to have a long leave or the right of fathers to share part of that leave*". Polarisation became evident once again since for some participants to take away parents' right to choose who uses the parental leave and to make fathers take half would be devastating for breast feeding as well as for the child's wellbeing; while for others fathers' involvement in childcare is a precondition for a fair balance between work and family life in dual earner families, as well as being extremely important from the perspective of the child who experiences parenting involvement and not only the mother's commitment.

However given the fact that time spent on unpaid work is significantly higher for women/mothers than for men/fathers it was also stated that a good model of gender equality should remunerate the unpaid childcare work which is mostly done by women/mothers.

Policy does not give conditions for free choice between genders.

On the other hand, another group of participants stressed the fundamental role of policies in creating conditions for parents to choose. In this group it was considered that the child benefits most when both parents are engaged in the first years of a child's life. It was stressed that it is neither the mother nor the father, it is 'both' mother and father. The example of Iceland was given, where high levels of breastfeeding seem to be combined with high take up rates of parental leave by fathers. Several aspects were underlined concerning the role of policies regarding men's involvement in childcare and household tasks: "*Policies should create the environment for families to have the choice on how many children they wish; if you want to give the choice you must have childcare facilities and the support of the family as well*".

Policies to promote parenting – the role of the media:

There was also a concern regarding policies that can promote parenting not only among men but also women. Given the divorce rates, the decline of fertility (fewer children) and new fertility patterns such as the postponement of childbirth, some participants raised the question of promoting parenting as a benefit for people's lives by emphasising "*the joy versus the burden, a signal of commitment, family togetherness and personal identity for younger cohorts*" in order to encourage them to become mothers and fathers. The important role the media may have in promoting the notion of parenting as an exciting and positive dimension of life was also mentioned, because role models are also supported by the media. Moreover, it was stated that all the actors in a society (legislation, State/local governments, different levels of education, NGOs, churches, professionals of health/mental care, youth organisations, press and media, etc.,) should be called for a common action in order to encourage young men and women to become mothers and fathers "*preparing adolescents for fatherhood and motherhood?*"

Research and policies do not cover diversity in families regarding same sex families:

Another point raised in the debate was that both laws and research have been homophobic regarding same sex families; homophobic research ignores same sex families, which are still invisible in statistics. "*For example, the gender pay gap affects women, but how does this affect lesbian couples? How does the gender pay gap impact on lesbian families? Are these women having a double pay gap and what are the impacts on the children? On the other hand, men earn more but how is it in*

gay couples? What about gay or lesbian parenting?" The need for further research on these subjects was pointed out.

Another discussion related with motherhood and fatherhood in same sex families was focussed on the possibility of adopting a child by same sex families. Some participants considered that there is a huge gap at policy level in respect to adoption and fertility treatments in lesbian or gay families: gay and lesbian families still cannot adopt children even when national laws recognise marriage between same sex couples: "*marriage between same sex partners excludes fertility and adoption*". Laws also do not recognise rights and ties between gay step fathers and lesbian step mothers towards their step children, for example when a biological father or mother dies. For some participants representations of father and motherhood should have nothing to do with sexual orientation and this independence should be transported to the political level ("*unlink sexual orientation from being a mother or a father*"); however for others children's rights come before parents' rights; in this respect it was also argued that "*two men cannot breastfeed*".

Do we need a unique parental system over the EU?

Parental leave at the European level was seen as having a great variation in terms of eligibility criteria as well as in terms of payment. However there was a general agreement that Europe has different cultures of state intervention and that there is no need for a general pattern of parental leave to be followed all over the EU. Nevertheless, some basic rights should be required for all state members and regulated under EU Directives. As an example, participants mentioned that there is no regulation on the entitlement to paternity leave at the European level, and that many countries still do not have it. Participants agreed that a global European Directive is needed to regulate either father's entitlements or the reconciliation of work and family life: "*policies are needed; parents and families in general need financial resources, services and time; each level of policy making, whether local, regional, national or at the European level, should respond to these three types of families needs. There should some form of cohesion between all these different leaves. The next Directive should be a global Directive on reconciling family and work which does not exist at the moment*"; Breastfeed regulations were also mentioned but considered to be included in the Directive on maternal employment protection.

The role of employers in promoting parenthood and family wellbeing:

Finally, all participants agreed that employers must be brought into the discussion; there is a crucial need to engage employers in future conferences since they also have a fundamental role in promoting parenting and family wellbeing "*state family policy can regulate some part of family life but it is very much the work life that influences families, we have to build up bridges between companies and families in family policy*".

Promoting parental leave during family life course…

There was a proposal to include parental leave into life course policies and not just centred on the short period after birth; the possibility of having a parental leave in other stages of the family life course such as, for example, when children become adolescents. This proposal was also seen as an alternative to father's involvement in childcare: "*paternal discussion is very important but we have to develop a parental leave over the life course in other stages of children's life when they most value the presence of the father* (…) *how can we encourage fathers to take parental leave or time off when the children are much older, for example, when they are teenagers?*"

Another suggestion was made concerning the possibility of having a family leave focussed on family care and not just children's care. For example, a family leave to care for other dependent relatives and not just centred on mothers or sisters as the main carers (as usually happens) but on other family members (such as fathers and brothers) that should be motivated to care during the family cycle of caring. According to this perspective, family leave can include several types of leave, maternity, paternity, parental as well as the care for other relatives.

Methodological issues

- Longitudinal studies (on the long term period) in order measure the best arrangements in terms of work and family life balance and the needs of fathers and mothers to have more time to spend with their children;

- Need for more advanced sophisticated indicators of father involvement in family life;

- Need for common definitions of the concept of 'substantial childcare' in order to make cross national comparisons when measuring father's involvement in childcare;

- More qualitative insights are required so we can have more information on men's attitudes toward having children (their reproductive behaviour, for example information on the number of children they fathered or expect to father), men's experiences as fathers as well on partners' attitudes and interactions; their feelings and wishes about their role in reconciliation.

Major gaps and challenges for research

There was a general agreement that research and policies have been focussed on women as mothers and that fathering and fatherhood is mostly perceived from

women's and children's points of view. Therefore research gaps are mostly related with the lack of reliable data on men's attitudes towards becoming/being a father. The following summarises the major research suggestions from participants:

- Need for research on the drivers that can influence fathers to be more involved in family life concerning childcare and unpaid work in general;

- Further research on the reasons why men delay, miss out on fatherhood or want fewer children than their partners;

- Data is also needed on (potential) parents/young adults' feelings (of security or insecurity) about becoming a parent, having, raising, educating a child;

- Further research on parenting in same sex families in order to make these groups visible and mainstreaming the research.

Key policy issues

Key policy questions/issues - challenges policies for EU level, national level, and local level:

- To assume reconciliation as a political issue that requires plural resources: financial, services, but also time;

- In the same line, an overall reduction of employees' working hours in order to improve family and personal lives;

- Promote real choices regarding the take up of parental leave by fathers, for example there is a need for paternity regulation at EU level concerning eligibility conditions and payment;

- To promote a global directive on reconciliation of family and work (as the current political framework is very divided into different compartments);

- To make parental leave easier to take, on the one hand, and, on the other, possible to take when children are older, in order to promote greater fathers' involvement (when the competition with the mother's time no longer exists);

- To include parental policies in life-course policies, otherwise they are directed toward a very short period of family time;

- To create a broader family leave in order to permit other family members (brothers, grandparents) to take leave for caring;

- To promote and protect the right to breastfeeding (time-off to breastfeed);

- To promote parenting, children as life's greatest joy, and not only the burdens of motherhood and fatherhood, in order to predispose men and women for parenthood;

- To set up an inventory of programs that exist in the EU member states for young people (to help) to prepare them for a possible future fatherhood and motherhood;

- To remove from the legal framework the homophobic legislation, the laws that make difficult or even impossible for gays and lesbians to fulfil their parental aspirations (as the illegibility of some sex couples for adoption or fertility treatments);

- In the same line, to unlink once and for all parenthood from sexual orientation;

- Ongoing monitoring of the impact of various policies on different groups of children, fathers and mothers namely:

  - questions concerning child penalties experienced by mothers and child poverty;

  - the effectiveness of policies in transcending the gendered division of labour and 'equalising' the gendered responsibilities of parenthood.

- There is a need for regulation at the EU level concerning processes of obtaining children for adoption in developing countries and subsequent processes of delivering the children to adopting parents in the EU member states (to ensure that the screening process regarding these parents meets high standards of integrity).

Workshop 3 – *Ageing, families and social policy*

Chair:

Teppo Kroger, University of Jyväskylä

Keynote speakers/initial discussants:

Claude Martin, CNRS/EHESP, University of Rennes

Claudine Attias-Donfut, CNAV, Caisse Nationale D'Assurance Vieillesse, France

Rapporteur:

Sanda Samitca, ICS University of Lisbon

Stakeholders/Other Participants:

Agata D'Addato, Eurochild

Alexander Schwentner, UNICEF Austria

Anne Charlier-des Touches, FEFAF

Anneli Antonnen, Tampere University, Finland

Anneli Miettinen, Family Federation of Finland (Väestöliitto)

Cinzia Sechi, European Trade Union Confederation

Clem Henricson, Family and Parenting Institute

Elisabeth Potzinger, Katholischer Familienverband Österreich

Eric De Wasch, Gezinsbond - Belgium

Francesco Belleti, Forum delle Associazioni Familiari (FDAF)

Françoise Meauze, CNAFC France (member of UNAF)

Ignacio Socias, The Family Watch

James O'Brien, Westlink Consulting

Joan Stevens, World Movement of Mothers

Jorma Sipila, Tampere University

Leeni Hansson, Tallinn University

Leonids Mucenieks, Union of Latvian Large Families Associations

Luk De Smet, Gezinsbond - Belgium

Marek Havrda, European Commission

Marjo Kuronen, Family Research Center, University of Jyväskylä

Michela Costa, COFACE

Rada Elenkova, The Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation (BGRF)

Roumjana Modeva, NM "Women and Mothers against Violence"-member of COFACE

Sabrina Stula, Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments in Europe

Shirley Dex, Institute of Education, University of London

Sonja Blum, Austrian Institute for Family Studies, University of Vienna

Stanislav Trnovec, Club of Large Families Slovakia

Sven Iversen, Arbeitsgemeinschaft der deutschen Familienorganisationen (AGF) e.V.

Tobias Teuscher, Centre de Théorie Politique, ULB

Organisation of the workshop and keynote speeches

In this workshop there were two keynote speakers: Claude Martin (CNRS/EHESP University of Rennes), and Claudine Attias-Donfut (CNAV, France).

Claude Martin's presentation was focussed on the impact of ageing at the EU level concerning the evolution of care needs as well as future care arrangements. Long-term care policies and welfare regimes were also mentioned, as well as the impact of those care arrangements on the family, introducing the subjective dimension of pressure and also the necessity to think more in terms of reconciling work and care for elderly persons.

According to Claude Martin, "*ageing is one of the main challenges that probably most of our European countries are facing for the next decades*". However he considered that there has been in some European countries a kind of a split between family policy and social policy (particularly elderly care policies) as they are related to different interest groups, different research and decision making fields with different administrative organisations. Considering that "*family does not stop with the ageing process*", there is a need to join these two fields of research and policy- family and fragile elderly - in caring policies.

Although the balance between state, market and family has changed dramatically since the eighties, with developments in welfare regimes as well as developments related to local authorities and collective insurances, "*the major part of caring responsibility and burden is still on the shoulders of the family caregivers - spouses, daughters, daughters in law and of course some sons and male spouses, but this is a gender issue for all of our countries*". Claude Martin stressed three main challenges for the next decades: the ageing and decrease of the EU population; the financial balance of the pension scheme; and the care deficit hypothesis in terms of the reduction of the availability of "*free of charge of services of women in the household*". According to him, the main future question for social care is not so much the welfare state regimes and the differences between countries but the policy tracing of the reforms to be carried out: "*we are all confronted with the same challenges and solutions: the combination of paid and unpaid, formal and informal care solutions*". As main future trends and needs, he highlighted the need for more flexible solutions developed at the local level (the regulation of care management on a local basis); the challenge of combining the health care and social care; the reinforcement of home based care. He also stressed the importance of knowing more about caregivers' feelings and meanings of pressure. As we will be confronted in the future with more and more people on the labor market combining elderly care and work (we usually think of work and family reconciliation in terms of childcare and not so much in terms of elderly care) a key policy question is how to manage the constraints of time, on the one hand, and the way people are feeling pressure or not, on the other hand: "*it is not only the need for time but also the need to reduce pressure for these people*".

The second key note, by Claudine Attias-Donfut focussed on Family support, and showed some results of the SHARE study (large European comparative longitudinal survey - "*Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe*"[5]): how family support is influenced by numerous factors (from the economic situation to the health status of the caregivers) and how (even though there are differences between countries) this support is mainly occasional, but activated and present in situations of emergency and crisis, with the family then playing a role of insurance. In fact, as already mentioned for childcare, family informal support and formal support (professional help) are complementary rather that in competition.

Summarising research results, she stressed the important contribution elderly people give to family life, family solidarity and also to society's economy, with the elderly being one of the most consistent providers of support given to several family members including other elderly persons. There are also significant inequalities among families "*the more social and economical resources the more help is given*"; as well as significant gender inequalities as men (when they are the main caregivers) are more likely to rely on professional support.

Main Discussions and Contributions from Stakeholders

Before presenting the several research challenges as well as the key policy questions that were underlined by the participants in this workshop, the following paragraphs summarise some of the main points of discussion:

Elderly care is mainly provided by family.

"*About 80 per cent of hours of care are provided by unpaid carers mostly family carers; these carers have important sets of relationships, for example, the relation between care and formal providers; their relationships with other family members; relationships with governments, but also increasingly relations with policy area*s".

Implications of demographic trends in the future of care:

The decrease in fertility rates also implies that in the future often only one child will have to care for his/her parents alone and this means an increased burden. On the other hand, growing numbers of elderly persons imply (potentially) increasing caring needs. However in a context of a parallel decrease in the number of young people, the question of a potential 'care deficit' may be raised – that is, a decline in the availability of unpaid/informal carers, whilst the needs are increasing.

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[5] See http://www.share-project.org/.

Intergenerational solidarity as a key issue:

Regarding the elderly persons it was stressed that they are not only care receivers, but also care givers in providing care for their grandchildren but also in terms of economical transfers. In the same way elderly persons should not be considered only as a potential burden (or inducing burden for the carers) but they are also a resource for family and for society. The importance of active ageing was in also mentioned, in relation to their role in society.

"Grandparents provide practical, emotional and financial support for their grandchildren. There should be greater recognition of their contribution and explicit attention to meeting their needs too. Improvements in care services for elderly people can support family networks in carrying out their care responsibilities".

"The birth of a first grandchild is often the moment when parents and grandparents find each other again".

"Intergenerational solidarity can play a key role in developing fairer and more sustainable responses to the major economic and social challenges that the EU is facing today (…) public authorities should develop holistic and sustainable policies supporting all generations, facilitate access to adequate income and to affordable and quality services, particularly housing, education and health for people of all ages, and foster exchange of good practice and mutual learning
between different generations".

How are the elderly people represented within society?

"How are they represented in terms of institutions and non-governmental organisations at national and European level? How can they communicate to the society their needs and their situation?"

Family care is less and less considered as natural but rather as a choice…

"This will also have consequences on elderly care and on public support regarding the interconnections between formal and informal care, this offer should be locally provided and flexible; emphasis was also on the need for a wide range of care offers, institutional but also home based both affordable".

"There is an increasing social demand for a full recognition of informal carers, alias women and men, who freely choose to dedicate themselves fully to their dependent family members. Concrete social and financial measures should be taken to facilitate care inside the family, as the best care environment possible for persons in need of care and various forms of support".

Sustainability of family care:

Another element mentioned was the question of the sustainability of family care. The risk of burden for carers was also mentioned, as well as the consequences in terms of wellbeing (feelings of pressure).

A form of 'elderly sitting' was mentioned (that is the possibility to ask for somebody to come to the home and stay during the day or in the evening with the elderly person while the carer goes out).

Also regarding family carers, the need for various forms of support, and of respite care was stressed (with provision of services such as day care centres that would take care of dependent persons during the holiday season so that carers can have a period of holiday as well).

The interconnections between two major demographic trends: ageing and migration:

Several questions were raised concerning this topic: "*is migration slowing down the process of ageing?; Is ageing changing the forms of migration since the increase needs of the elderly are attracting new forms of care workers?; Is there a new care sector mainly occupied by female migrants?; Migrants themselves are getting old and they have specific needs that are still not studied*".

The perverse effects of some of the most flexible care solutions (Badanti in Italy, almost exclusively Romanian women) which might be leading to the development of a migrant black market of caring workers should be understood and researched.

Methodological issues

- Need more qualitative research on care arrangements, time devoted to care tasks and its constraints but also on what carers feel about the time they spend on caring; their feelings of pressure and the meaning of pressure.

Major gaps and challenges for research

- Lack of research on the subjective dimension of care arrangements (how is the caring arrangement experienced by the carers) as well as a lack of information on the impact of this care on the carers' wellbeing, namely on the subjective feeling of pressure;

- There is not much research on some obvious key causes of problems for carers: managing incontinence; managing and living with someone who cumulates dependency with a mental health disease or a depression;

- More information on sustainable family care: how and why people begin, maintain and decide to end providing care (carer perspective); what works for carers in relation to training, respite, cash benefits, social security, and services support;

- It is important to focus on the contribution of spouses (often they don't regard what they are doing as providing care) who might be underestimated in the statistics on carers and caring;

- More information about what works in terms of building capacity – what kind of support really works for carers? Providing information and training, when does it work, how is it best provided, who should provided it?;

- There is also a lack of information about the challenges of reconciling work and care from the perspect5ive of elderly care; thus more research should be developed on the policy measures developed for those carers;

- More research on economic aspects of being a carer – what have been the consequences for carers in the current financial crises; what happens to the carers who give up employment; what is going to happen to the carers in their later life regarding to their own pensions?;

- Research should also look at good practices and a far better exchange of information on good practices concerning providing support to carers;

- A lack of research on migrant care workers was also mentioned:

  - Global chains of caring at a distance for family members who were left in the country of origin;

  - Specific needs of the ageing migrants;

  - Elderly migrants and returning migrants.

Key policy issues

- Need to know more about the process of reform on the long term care policies in the EU countries as policies are changing quite rapidly;

- Social policy should be looking at carers at risk: what causes the pressure? Who are the carers which are most at risk?;

- Sustainability of care and future pensions;

- Specific policies orientated for carers regarding: training; payment; employment, social protection, health of carers;

- Policies regarding work and care from the perspective of elderly care;

- Policies promoting intergenerational solidarity;

- Retirement housing;

- More investment in palliative care.

Workshop 4 – *Changes in conjugal life*

<u>Chair</u>:

Jean Kellerhalls, University of Geneva

<u>Keynote speakers/initial discussants</u>:

Brian Heaphy, University of Manchester

<u>Rapporteur</u>:

Rommel Mendes-Leite, University of Lyon

<u>Stakeholders/Other Participants</u>:

Ada Garriga Cots, International Federation for Family Development

Anna Maria Vella, Cana Movement, Malta

Elisa Marchese, State Institute of Family Research at the University of Bamberg

Fred Deven, Kenniscentrum WVG - Dept. of WellBeing, Public Health & Family

Jana Jamborová, New Women for Europe

João Mouta, Parents Forever Association

John Hebo Nielsen, Joint Council of Child Issues

José Alberto Simões, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas - UNL

Kaija Turkki, University of Helsinki and International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE)

Karin Wall, ICS

Kimmo Jokinen, Family Research Center, University of Jyväskylä

Liliane Leroy, FPS/COFACE

Lorenza Rebuzzini, Forum delle Associazioni Familiari (FDAF)

Maks Banens, MODYS – Université de Lyon

Marietta Pongracz, Demographic Research Institute Budapest

Michiel Matthes, Alliance for Childhood European Network Group

Miriam Perego, University of Milan-Bicocca

Owen James, World Mothers Movement - Europe

Rommel Mendes-Leite, Université de Lyon

Sofia Aboim, ICS

Yves Roland-Gosselin, CNAFC

Organisation of the workshop and keynote speeches

There were two presentations in this policy workshop. The first one, by Eric Widmer (University of Geneva) on "*The future of partnerships and family configurations*". The second one, by Brian Heaphy, on "*Developments in conjugal life: same sex partnerships and lesbian and gay families*".

Although considering that it is very important to understand what happens within conjugal ties, Eric Widmer's presentation was focussed on how these conjugal ties are embedded in a larger set of relationships. What Eric Widmer wanted to emphasise is that family configurations (that is the larger structure of family ties that might include grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends, colleagues) play an important role in partnerships in late modernity, meaning that there is a variety of ties that can function as a backup of conjugal relationships. According to this configurational perspective on family it is impossible to understand the conjugal relationship without referring to these larger sets of ties that support couples, "*no couple is an island; no couple can be understood in itself*".

In order to illustrate the importance of these ties beyond the husband and wife partnerships, Eric Widmer presented some results of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP)[6] concerning the measurement of social networks, namely the persons to whom people go to in case of need. Results reveal that partnerships have a great importance; the cohabiting partnership is the first person that is called for support in case of need. However it is also possible to see that there is a large number of alternative ties that play an important role in supporting partnership - the mother, the daughter, the sister, the brothers in law…- "*if you take the sum of them into account it becomes evident that conjugal life is not the only forms of support that exist within families in late modernity, particularly when considering the second person to be called upon for emotional support, specially mothers but also daughters (women) play a major role in providing support to individuals across all countries within Europe*". Accordingly, Eric Widmer presented three patterns of relatedness: 1 – 'multiple ties oriented' (less emphasis on partnerships and more on mother, father, sister); 2 – 'emphasis on conjugal relationships'; 3 – 'children oriented' (more emphasis on son and daughter). While raising the question: "*do family configurations matter for partnerships? Can we make a link between the way configurations are structured and the wellbeing of couples?*" Eric Widmer proposed two hypotheses: 1 – the first one states that "*family matters beyond partnerships and nuclear families, there are ties between adults and parents and siblings that are really important for individual development and for conjugal life but also for the education of children*"; 2 - the second one argues that "*configurations and partnerships are interrelated; couples with more support interdependencies with*

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[6] See http://www.issp.org/

relatives and friends will report higher conjugal quality than those with less supportive interdependencies".

An important point highlighted by research is that family resources exist beyond partnerships and nuclear families and that they can be used as social capital, "*something that individuals can use in order to advance in their own life, both in their intimate life, professional, education of the children…*"

Therefore Eric Widmer concluded that policy makers should not only focus on marriage and nuclear families "*because families are much richer than that*" and should take into account this diversity of ties beyond the nuclear family; "*this will help us to promote partnerships without being entrenched in normative models of families which probably will be less and less present in the near future*".

Following Eric Widmer's presentation there was a brief discussion (see *Major Discussions and Contributions from Stakeholders - Overall Summary*) and afterwards Brian Heaphy made his presentation on: "*Developments in conjugal life: same sex partnerships and lesbian and gay families*".

Brian Heaphy focussed on "*what is exceptional in same sex relationships and what is very ordinary?*" According to him, we are dealing with a population which is partially invisible in statistics and research: "*same sex, lesbian and gay families are a hard to reach population particularly if looking for formalised couples*". Research on same sex relationships as well as on the changing legal contexts, in which these families must be understood, tends to be based on small and ad-hoc qualitative studies. Therefore, one of the main points stressed by Brian Heaphy is the absolute need for more systematic review of the existing research on 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' (not yet legally formalised) same sex partner relationships in order to give feedback to research as well as to law and policies.

Implications of policy and legal developments regarding same sex couples were considered by Brian Heaphy as a key policy issue. According to his view, talking about same sex families means talking about uneven developments: "*on the one hand it seems we are moving towards a legal broader recognition of partnerships, but those legal developments are uneven, they range from what might be seen as more formal marriage to what some people call marriage light arrangements*". He also stated that there are not only uneven developments in terms of law and recognition of partnership but there are also uneven developments in terms of how those recognitions have implications, for example, on the level of service provision, for example: "*social policy is often underpinned by gender assumptions, by gender care, and gender responsibilities that don't fully account for same sex relationships* (…) *is it possible to conceive gender neutral agenda policies?*"

Another main point stressed by Brian Heaphy concerned the challenges that same sex partners face in illegitimate contexts in terms of marginalisation and hostility due

to the way heterosexual norms are imposed or supported or actively pursued. Research suggests that the risks and threats that can emerge from this relate to violence harassment, depleted social capita and social isolation. All these have implications in terms of couple's wellbeing and resilience. On the other hand, recent research also points to the fact that same sex partners also feel unprepared to ask for family supported services when things go wrong, for example, in case of abusive relations and couples dissolution.

In response to these illegitimate contexts (where same sex couples might experience highly stressful situations) 'families of choice' appear as creative responses to marginalisation. Families of choice include same sex relationships but tend not to be biological or legally formalised; it is not the biological relationship that matters, it is more the social relationship: "*Can policy capture these kinds of more dynamic relationships?*"

An interesting fact needing further research is that cultural guidelines, particularly about gender, are no longer applicable to same sex families since they tend to have highly negotiated relationships and also tend to be more equal because they are based on gender sameness. However this area could benefit from further research. On the other hand, research should also focus on the gender pay gap that might be reinforced in same sex lesbian couples in comparison with same sex gay couples.

Complexity increases with the presence of children. Although there are new choices to become parents in same sex families (access to technology; informal parents' agreements; adoption, children from previous heterosexual relationships, etc.) there still persists a general perception that children are more exposed to risks when living in same sex families; the wellbeing of a child might be compromised by the nature of the same sex relation. However Brian Heaphy emphasises that a key finding from research is that there is no discernible long-term impact on differences around children's wellbeing within same sex relations in comparison with heterosexual ones. He also refers that in his recent work where he explored relationships among young couple civil partnerships (which became legal possible in UK since in 2005) he found notable continuities and similarities to young heterosexual marriages such as the focus on love, commitment, security; a tendency towards monogamous couple commitments; connections with family and cultural traditions and secure and stable environment for children.

After Brian Heaphy's presentation, the debate continued. The main discussions are presented below.

Main Discussions and Contributions from Stakeholders

Wellbeing of families is related with the existence of extended ties outside of the nuclear family.

"Is this also related to family management in respect of unpaid and paid work, parents caring for children? Women with bi-centric families feel much better restraining their career than women who have not this kind of network; networks help to cope with the consequences of decreasing work participation; but there were no differences regarding paid and unpaid work".

"Friends are very important in networks; however to have only friends in personal connections is not enough, you need to have also blood ties".

"Young adults who are in transition have a huge amount of friends cited as family members; the same happens concerning late year families with small children, specially in non divorce families; on the other hand, fragile individuals (psychiatric problems and incapacities) seem to have very small family configuration based on blood ties but might include professional as their family members".

"There are differences between men and women, women seem to have more ties related to friends; there are also differences regarding migrant families who do not have as many bi-centric families as native families; migrant people are more connected in bi-centric networks when belonging to a lower class".

What are the criteria for defining bi-centric families?

"Need to consider series of indicators: frequency of interactions with friends, support provided by friends and family members, finance, emotional support, frequency of interactions with family members".

Why are there differences between countries in international comparison?

"Conjugal ties oriented countries were more to be found in countries with a strong welfare systems; and multiple ties oriented are more to be found in liberal non interventionist family policy; however this is not very clear needs further research"; Eric Widmer thinks that there is a link between policies and the importance of conjugality: "when there is a strong backup in family polices there is more emphasis in conjugal ties and be more demanding towards conjugal ties than in situations where the state is minimal…"

Is there any relation between types of conjugal interactions and networks configurations relate to network ties?

"Types of conjugal interactions and configurations will be further researched. However studies on recomposed families, step families, blended families reveal that

there is very interesting signs that the two dimensions - types of conjugal interactions and configurations - are very much interconnected".

Methodological challenges:

Also theoretical challenges: "*the couple was not questioned five decades ago, but today we have to expand our theoretical approaches and connect subjects that usually are not truly connected like: configuration approach, family functioning approach, and also include more types of family forms: heterosexual couples, homosexual couples, married couples, cohabiting couples, living apart together (why do we call these living apart together a couple?); we need to define new indicators that may allow us to compare not only different and emerging family forms and dynamics but also what these different forms represent in different European countries, it is a big theoretical challenge to map this plurality*".

Social policy and new forms of family:

"*Policies are addressing this issue mainly by recognising same sex marriages or same sex partnership but they are not dealing with other issues, namely with social parenting neither in the context of same sex couples or blended families; there is strong focus in Europe towards the recognition of same sex marriages and not discussing the real challenges for same sex families which is how are they going to care and parenting including the recognition of parental rights which are essential rights for the wellbeing of children…*"

"*It is important to focus on the linkages between policies and families lives; there is a need for more research on the gaps in policies, the gaps in policies are related with the way policies are dealing with new family situations, for example, in post divorce families who receives family benefits? It is usually the mother even in joint custody of children; some couples negotiate but there is no regulation on it…So it is important to interview families in new situations in order to understand what gaps still exist in policies and suggest feedback into social policies; research on gaps in policies in order to improve the wellbeing of conjugal and family life*".

Different political arrangements in countries…

Conflicting tendencies: "*if you are living in a same sex partnership and do not live in a context of recognition there are implications on daily life and on emotional roles; and this can also have an impact on children wellbeing*".

Children's wellbeing in same sex couples:

Recent research show that children do not suffer from having same sex parents: "*they suffer most from conflicting negotiations from their parents divorce; however*

they can experience discrimination at school; a child's wellbeing depends more on the environment than on the same sex nature of the couple".

Other discussions:

"*Is negotiation different in gender sameness?*"

"*Differences in divorce rates in same sex and heterosexual couples*".

"*There are political assumptions in care, service provision and family support services that support gender inequalities*".

"*Gender sameness and inequalities in terms of economic inequality*".

"*How social policy can potentially improve conjugal life by taking into account changes in conjugal lives?*"

Methodological issues

- There is a lack of basic demographic household data – defining forms of conjugal living; percentages of living apart, civil partnerships in relation to marriages, etc. A need for more and diverse official statistics on conjugal and family forms at European level;

- Need for more theoretical approaches and new indicators in order to compare not only different and emerging family forms and dynamics but also what these different forms represent in different European countries;

- Need for more financial investment on methodological advances linking qualitative and quantitative studies.

Major gaps and challenges for research

- More cross national research on the internal dynamics of families across European societies; we know practically nothing; we have very poor indicators, a little bit on housework, on division of paid labour and nothing more;

- Longitudinal studies on couples and conjugal life – how do they build their relationship; when do they decide to get married and when do they decide to have children, transitions to conjugal life and transitions into parenthood;

- More research on partnerships and families across the life course and in specific periods of transitions (parenthood, divorce, remarriage, etc.); looking at transitions gives the longitudinal perspective;

- How couples manage transitions and which are factors that make some couples succeed and go on with their relationship; which factors can influence couples to give up their relationship and divorce;

- Further research on types of conjugal interactions and its interconnections with family configurations;

- Further research on family definition; how the notion of family is being build up across the Europe;

- Look more at minority families such as immigrant, gypsy families;

- Increasing cohabitation and decrease of marriage – reasons why young people are choosing to cohabit rather than getting married (transversal trend to people already married before, never married and new relationship where never married);

- Research possible linkages between marriage and social participation in society, voluntary, political;

- More systematic review of the existing research on same sex families;

- How same sex partnerships in lesbian and gay families are (re)configured in different contexts of 'legitimacy' and marginalisation?;

- In what ways are they and the challenges they face more or less ordinary and exceptional? Gender roles; parenting; child's wellbeing; gender gap, etc.;

- How are families structured through their practices and also what are their problems?;

- Most of research is based on heterosexual parents; there is a need for research related to the new choices of becoming parents in same sex couples; who is the biological parent? How is it negotiated in the relationship?;

- More comparative work on routes into and out of partnerships; routes into parenting and arrangements post-dissolution;

- More studies on the generational perspective.

Key policy issues

- There is a need for more linkages between policies and new forms of families;

- More research on the gaps in policies, specifically in the way policies are dealing with new family situations, for example, in post divorce families who receives family benefits? In joint custody who receives family benefit? There is no regulation on it;

- Understand what gaps still exist in policies from the perspective of families and suggest feedback into social policies;

- Where and how heterosexual assumption underpins 'family relevant' legislation, policy and service provision;

- Policies should take into account feedback from research on same-sex families;

- Recognition of both biological and social parenting at policy level;

- Influence of law and policy on same sex partnership and lesbian and gay family structures and relating/caring practices;

- Teenage pregnancy - comparative statistics on teenage pregnancy - how are the different countries dealing with, which policies?;

- Importance of policies that are preparing people for couple relations both before and after the first child is born;

- How social policy helps couples managing difficult transitions in conjugal life: into parenthood; unemployment; teenage parenting; family conflicts; family caring.

Workshop 5 – *Family relationships and wellbeing*

Chair:

Anne-Claire de Liedekerke, World Movement of Mothers

Keynote speakers/initial discussants:

Gordon Neufeld, University of British Columbia

Rapporteur:

Jonas Himmelstrand, HARO, Sweden

Stakeholders/Other Participants:

Agata D'Addato, Eurochild

Ellu Saar, Institute of International and Social Studies, Tallinn University

Ignacio Socias, The Family Watch

Jana Jamborová, New Women for Europe

João Mouta, Parents Forever Association

Julie de Bergeyck, World Movement of Mothers

Katherine Bird, Bundesforum Familie

Kimmo Jokinen, Family Research Center, University of Jyväskylä

Lea Pulkkinen, University of Jyväskylä

Madeleine Wallin, Haro

Maks Banens, MODYS – Université de Lyon

Marek Havrda, European Commission

Margaret O'Brien, University of East Anglia

Marina Rupp, State Institute of Family Research at the University of Bamberg (ifb)

Miriam Perego, University of Milan-Bicocca

Michiel Matthes, Alliance for Childhood European Network Group

Olga Tóth, Institute of Sociology HAS

Ranjana Das, LSE

Sabrina Stula, Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments in Europe

Tijne Berg-le Clercq, Netherlands Youth Institute

Tomasz Elbanowski, Ombudsman for Parents Rights Association - Poland

Yves Roland-Gosselin, CNAFC

Organisation of the workshop and keynote speeches

The workshop consisted of one keynote presentation and four statements, followed by a brief discussion on main research points and key policy issues.

As a developmental psychologist the keynote speaker Gordon Neufeld focussed on *"family relationships and the wellbeing of the children both as today's children and as tomorrow's adults"*.

According to Gordon Neufeld, when the literature on this subject is reviewed one theme stands out from the others: the effect of separation on children. Often the conclusion is *"that separation from parents - whether physical and emotional - adversely impacts a child more than any other single experience. The impact of separation can be far reaching: behavior, development and personality"*.

Therefore one major research question in Gordon Neufeld's view is: *"how do we take children from their families to care for them and educate them, yet providing sufficient connection so that they do not experience the deleterious effect of separation?"* One central concept is attachment as well as maturation: *"if deep attachment enables a child to preserve a sense of connection then we should be looking at the conditions that are required to cultivate this kind of attachment (…) maturation, not schooling or socialising, is the primary process rendering children fit for adult society"*. In other words: the more a child is attached, the more able he will be to adapt to society, be resilient and be emotionally fit for society. If parents and various institutions are aware of and sensitive to this attachment, both will manage to find solutions to minimise the impact of separation. The solution must be focussed on *"the development of a child's capacity for relationship and the resulting ability to reserve a sense of connection even when physically separated"*. Therefore a final quote is: *"the wellbeing of today's children, tomorrow's adults, and our future society, will depend upon our ability to support the family as the womb of psychological maturation"*; *"how can we support families to cultivate the kind of attachments that will give birth to the realisation of human potential?"*

Main Discussions and Contributions from Stakeholders

Following the keynote speech, there was a general discussion. The following topics summarise the main points underlined by all participants as well by the stakeholders who made statements.

Stakeholders' contributions:

Ignacio Socias from the Family Watch (Spain) provided an analysis of over a hundred recent international studies that agree on the negative effects that marital breakdown has on the happiness of children and parents involved and on national

economies as well. These conclusions have been summarised by the "*2009 The Family Watch Annual Report – The Sustainable Family*". In light of these findings, his paper attempts to ascertain the requirements that enable a family to be 'sustainable', according to the definition coined by the "*Brundtland Report*"[7] in 1987. Accordingly, he refers to a 'sustainable family' as one in which its members strive for their own wellbeing without compromising the wellbeing of their descendants. He did caution that it does not mean that every marriage fulfills its function properly.

Agata D'Addato's presentation (from Eurochild) was focussed on positive parenting and empowering parents in their education role. The fight against child poverty in Europe has become a top political priority. A strong focus has been placed on promoting the quality of life and the wellbeing of children, which is strongly determined by their family situation and the quality and accessibility of services. Over the last decade there has been a growing commitment in Europe to family support. However, more attention should be paid to ensure access to appropriate material resources but also psychological and social support. A strength-based approach should be taken: an approach which values parents' empowerment. To create a good environment for children, there is a need to support families in their parental role. Actions that remove barriers to positive parenting should be further promoted.

In her statement, Sylvie von Lowis (MMM France) reminded the working group of the importance of prevention in supporting families and grassroots efforts done through NGOs. Her policy recommendation is to raise awareness and increase recognition of the social value of parental roles.

Roumjana Modeva (Women and Mothers against Violence, Bulgaria): through a recent survey held in Bulgaria among ethnical minority groups, she stated that the solidarity between generations is one very important aspect of family wellbeing in those groups.

General discussions:

In the general discussion there was some controversy about the attachment theory presented by Gordon Neufeld. Major reactions concerned: the fact that there is a professional debate on this topic which disagrees with the model presented and that empirical existing research shows that that there are other more important threats to the child's wellbeing and future development as adults such as violence and emotional treats; there are other possible alternatives in terms of attachment to parents; also adoption is an example of the possible reattachment of children.

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[7] See http://www.un-documents.net/wced-ocf.htm

Quality of life and wellbeing of children...

"Is strongly determined by their family situation and the quality and accessibility of services; more attention should be paid to ensure families access to appropriate material resources but also psychological and social support towards parents' empowerment".

"Prevention of family breakdown is needed rather than keeping families together at all cost".

Reconciling employment and family life: links to child poverty and wellbeing:

"A good work/life balance for parents is critical to the wellbeing of children and society, as both income poverty and time poverty can harm child development. Children whose parents are not in paid work are more likely to be poor, while mothers who have interrupted their careers to care for their children are at higher risk of poverty in later life".

Fathers' involvement:

"Solo caretaking by fathers is associated with their continued caretaking of older children and grandchildren. Research shows that early active involvement by fathers can lead to a range of positive outcomes for children and young people. These include: better peer relationships; fewer behaviour problems; lower criminality and substance abuse; higher educational and occupational mobility relative to their parents' employment; and higher self-esteem. Conversely, low involvement by father is linked with negative outcomes for children, and the links tend to be stronger for vulnerable children".

Family structures and the psychological aspects of a family.

"A bridge was established between family structures and the psychological aspects of a family. The Lisbon conference has focussed very much on family structures and on how to adapt society to new family structures, from a sociological point of view. Of course this perspective is very important, but we think it would also be most interesting to establish bridges with a psychological perspective: to take into account the impact of structural changes on individuals, on their personal development and wellbeing. It seems to us more research should be necessary on these issues".

"I would encourage the participation in the dialogue of psychologists - who can provide valuable insights into the long term effects of family policies - as well the sociologists and researchers present".

Family wellbeing cohesion and care:

"Since many of us work in the EU institutional environment, we realise that most of fundamental EU policy texts refer to social cohesion (among economic and territorial) as a way out from the crisis and a tool towards a dynamic growth (see for instance "Commission Work Paper 2010"). On the other hand, those documents apply for the concept of citizens' wellbeing as a tool for the EU successful policies".

"(...) Family is the initial model of wellbeing. It is the first laboratory for social models, for social cohesion. We wonder how we can implement cohesion and wellbeing in society if citizens don't have that cultural model impregnated by education and experience developed from a family context".

"Family wellbeing is based on the triad: solidarity between generations; saving of the family traditions and customs; sustainable social and economical development".

Other discussions:

"Enhancement of parental skills".

"Solidarity between generations – basis of wellbeing of the families in the contemporary circumstances".

"Importance of stability, prevention and parental and couple education".

Major gaps and challenges for research

- Research that helps to understand what leads to stable families (sociology in connection with the psychological perspective);

- Research that helps to understand how to reach parents in order to better educate/train parents on parenting and couple life;

- Research on how policies can support families to cultivate the kind of attachments that ensure the development of human potential;

- Research that helps to understand what families (father, mother, children) actually want;

- Research on the impact of joint custody (which is becoming more frequent after divorce) on fathers' and mothers' professional career, for example in the case of qualified parents, regarding main obstacles, and negotiations within couples;

- Also important is to research the impact of joint custody on child's wellbeing in comparison to other forms of custody.

Key policy issues

- Help make families 'sustainable': find mechanisms that encourage stability and support spouses in their efforts to sustain their marriage;

- Policies providing parenting education and training should be further promoted;

- Mainstreaming children's rights in policymaking;

- Recognition of the diverse types of parenting and parental situations;

- Focus on positive attitude/on what works and interchange of best practice;

- Promote the creation of a 'family friendly employer label' for enterprises (they should fulfil a questionnaire on equal opportunities, flexible timetables, children care facilities, etc.);

- Ensure access to services to support parents, such as:

    - Local centers and services dispensing information, counseling and training on parenting and couple relationship;

    - Educational programs for parents (using TV for example);

    - Training on communication skills, problem solving, conflict resolution;

    - Spaces where parents can go to exchange experiences and learn from one another;

    - Parental involvement programs;

    - Programs to support children's education, prevent school drop outs and promote cooperation between schools and parents;

    - Help lines for both parents and children in a crisis situation.

- Early intervention with families at risk (such as migrant families, parents and children with disabilities, teenage parents or parents in difficult social and economic circumstances);

- Policy for promote, support and protection solidarity between generations as basis;

- Policies to provide parents (specially fathers) preserve the connection with the children after the divorce;

- Policies promoting higher participation of fathers in all situations of family life, etc.);

- Identifying the countries with 'joint custody' legal frames and new legislation adopted by countries in this respect in order to improve legal national frames.

Workshop 6 – *Gender equality and families*

<u>Chair</u>:

Clem Henricson, National Family Planning and Parenting Institute, UK

<u>Keynote speakers/initial discussants</u>:

Illona Ostner, University Gottingen

Shirley Dex, Institute of Education, London

<u>Rapporteur</u>:

Sofia Aboim, ICS, University of Lisbon

<u>Stakeholders/Other Participants</u>:

Alexander Schwentner, UNICEF Austria

Anne Charlier-des Touches, FEFAF

Anneli Miettinen, Family Federation of Finland (Väestöliitto)

Brian Heaphy, University of Manchester, UK

Carmen Leccardi, University of Milano-Bicocca

Elisa Marchese, State Institute of Family Research at the University of Bamberg (ifb)

Epp Reiska, Institute of International and Social Studies, Tallinn University

Florence von Erb, World Movement of Mothers

Hana Haskova, Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

Helena Hiila, The Family Federation of Finland

Ilona Ostner, Georg-August University Göttingen

José Alberto Simões, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas - UNL

Judit Gazsi, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour - Hungary

Karin Jurczyk, German Youth Institute

Katherine Bird, Bundesforum Familie

Marietta Pongracz, Demographic Research Institute Budapest

Marjo Kuronen, Family Research Center, University of Jyväskylä

Martina Leibovici-Mühlberger, ARGE Erziehungsberatung/Alliance for Childhood

Olaf Kapella, Austrian Institute for Family Research, University of Vienna

Owen James, World Mothers Movement – Europe

Philippa Taylor, CARE

Renata Kaczmarska, United Nations

Silvan Agius, ILGA-Europe

Stanislav Trnovec, Club of Large Families Slovakia

Veronika Ágnes Herche, Demographic Research Institute Budapest

Organisation of the workshop and keynote speeches

In this workshop session there were two keynote speeches by Illona Ostner and Shirley Dex. Both presented a number of important aspects to map the 'state of the art' on issues related to gender equality in contemporary Europe while also pointing out major problems and gaps of both research and policy making.

Monitoring gender equality (at the EU level) led to the production of statistics producing a high level of interconnection between policies and the production of gender indicators that allow us to measure gender developments. In her presentation on "*Gender equality and families*" Shirley Dex presented an overview of major trends on gender equality in a number of key areas. For example, the presentation stressed that in employment there has been a rising quality, particularly among younger women. However the same cannot be said regarding older women and women with small children.

Departing from a cross-national perspective it is possible to track major trends in models of family and work balance, which show that Europe is not a homogeneous scenario and that policies at supra-national level have not led all members to the same gender solutions. According to Shirley Dex it is crucial to establish a new framework for thinking gender equality issues on families in order to make comparisons between European countries. Differences between countries are quite evident when concerning: part-time labour; pay issues and part-time pay penalty; pay gaps between men and women; women's education.

Major questions concerning gender equality and families relate to: "*how to solve the simultaneous need for money/labour and caring time?*"; "A*re there conflicts between gender equality objectives and needs of families?*" Shirley Dex concluded that there is a need for rethinking the importance and role of flexibility, childcare services, division of labour between mother and father and unpaid work as well as potential time off. Flexibility has been seen as a solution but might also have ambivalent outcomes since men and women have different types of difficulties in dealing with the new flexible forms of employment; on the other hand although part-time is increasing in EU countries it is located in a range of low-paid and gender segregated jobs while skilled jobs are not flexible to part-time arrangements; this increases employment inequalities between men and women. Shirley Dex also stressed that childcare coverage rates are quite uneven across the EU. The public coverage for children below age 3 is still lacking and raising difficulties for work-family conciliation. Regarding the division of labour between mother and father and unpaid work, although the overall amount of hours of paid and unpaid work has become more equal between both genders, the distribution of time is still unequal, women do more, and this must be taken into account. However Shirley Dex highlighted that it is important to recognise that the overall gender segregation has improved, which is an important conclusion when looking at key data on gender.

From a policy making perspective, Ilona Ostner focussed on the degree of success attained at the EU level in terms of gender equality policies. The starting point of her presentation on "*the success and surprise story of EU gender policies*" was the following question: "*why have gender policies been successful to a certain extent?*" According to Ilona Ostner if we depart from a historical perspective the success of gender policies in the EU is not yet fully understood. In order to address this question we need to operate with a perspective that takes into account the real ways in which policies for gender equality are built up, if we want to further understand the complex causalities lying under the somewhat surprising pathways of gender equality policies in the EU. Therefore we need not only to map what policies exist nowadays, but to be aware of the specific agenda that lies at the backstage of policy making.

A main reason for focusing on these complex causalities, from a political standpoint, is deeply related to what Ilona Ostner considers to be here the element of surprise. Why have gender policies been so successful? The fact is that EU member states had not anticipated gender policies and the inroads they took. The EU can be considered a weak state, its institutions are weak, but nonetheless influence policies undertaken at the national level. However, this process of 'Europeanisation' has often had as a result the forced or unwilling compliance with gender equality policies that were not priorities at the national level. There is, however, a 'success' which is partly due to the feminist debates which marked the political agenda since the 1990s. Why is this happening? How do political analysts explain change? According to Ilona Ostner there are complex factors and causalities that lie upon societal and political explanations. For instance, political analysts would emphasise political explanation and institutional constraints. In this perspective, gender policies are developed through the appearance of some windows of opportunity and then "*you need actors who speak and act in terms that can be sold to those who make the public decisions*" (in this sense the role of epistemic communities is of the utmost importance). Gender policies need a window of opportunity, e.g., the EU and OCDE building up of coalitions that bring together transnational and national actors (the top bureaucrats); selected inclusion of experts: in this case certain (not all of course) leading feminists among other epistemic communities. In every single member state the idea and the perception of what is important might be different. But these perceptions at the hands of leading epistemic communities open avenues for the rise of lobbying groups, who have a role in deciding how gender equality must be addressed. Nevertheless, any gender-related policies at the European Union level must pass through two 'needles' eyes' in order to be discussed, adopted, and implemented: a first needle's eye at the level of the Union, with its narrow conception of equal opportunities in terms of equal treatment and its stringent requirement of consensus in the Council; and a second needle's eye in the variable implementation of EU legislation in the 'gender order' of each individual member state. These processes can be viewed in a double manner:

On the one hand, gender policies are a result of a negative integration, starting from the problems that have arisen from the need for free mobility of labour and workers in Europe. It was not expected that these policies were also of positive integration. The most important factor of surprise is the success of gender policies at the supranational level, with a historical movement from concerns with "*equal pay and equal opportunities for men and women*" to a more generalised focus on a general anti-discrimination legislation (with a whole set of targets which were brought in with the Amsterdam treaty and other measures particularly related to mothers employability and child care targets), that led to enhancement of regulation on matters of gender equality. This has been however a process of vertical integration linked to supra-national forms of regulation. Some regulatory inconsistencies are unresolved, stemming from what appears to be a "*ping-pong game*" between the national and European levels of regulation.

For Ilona Ostner what is important is to see how the process of institutionalisation of gender equality has evolved and resulted in a positive integration. There is a new 'constitutionalised' legislation that extended the meaning of gender equality, as a key part of the whole process of anti-discrimination targets and policy measures. However this important trend is also an ambivalent one, in spite of its success in regulating gender equality and constructing the whole debate around gender issues as an equivalent of gender equality:

- On the one hand, employment has been a very important catalyst;

- On the other, fertility policies are also of major importance for arguing in favour of gender equality policies.

Why and how has this happened? From the 1990's onwards there are new social risks that had to be dealt with. Declining fertility is important because we have labour shortages. It's not the number of children but the quality of children that matters the most (functionalist argument).

In conclusion, European gender policies are successful, yet:

- Today they are not the most important, if considered *per se*;

- Gender policies have never been an issue *per se*, but rather they are linked to other issues (labour shortages, demographic ageing, for instance);

- Gender policies have been highly dependent on the building up of coalitions. This is how politics actually works and it is a problem that has to be further addressed and monitored in the future.

Main Discussions and Contributions from Stakeholders

Reconciliation of work and family life:

There was a general agreement that one of the most important subjects for debate in terms of policies and policy making was the problem of family-work articulation.

One important point that was raised is related to the fact that gender equality policies are not a neutral subject, as they presuppose ideological conceptions on the ideal family, gender contract. The 'ideal arrangement' generated a strong debate and disagreement.

Private choice versus public regulation of gender and families:

On the one hand, for some participants, gender models belong to the private sphere and therefore they must be chosen and not imposed by public regulation. The state should not impose the adult worker model upon women, but rather respect the freedom of choice of women, men and couples. "*Private choice versus public regulation of gender and families*": an important debate which has opposed views of gender relations and which are reflected on the visions of what gender policies should be.

On the other hand, it was also stated that the focus on individual choice, though it must be must taken into account for gender equality, has to addressed in different terms if we want to find solutions for advancing further on gender equality policies. As Shirley Dex noted, mothers and fathers do not have to work full time. Part-time can be seen as a solution, but only if it is considered in equal terms for both men and women. However there is a pay differential that must be considered. Gender equality targets do not recognise the potential variability of choice – e.g. part-time work is undervalued and the rights of part-time workers remain a problematic issue.

New solutions to articulate family and work should be proposed. What is the financial value of housework and childcare? What role should the state have in transferring money to families in order to keep mothers/child-rearers at home?

It was also argued that new solutions to articulate family and work should be proposed (e.g. pension credits for homemakers, whether female or male); a solution that was suggested was women's self-employment as baby-sitter for their own children. This remark leads to an important issue: should care arrangements be paid for by the government? This was also considered as an important gap in research.

Furthermore, it was also stated that solutions based on the male breadwinner model do not take into account the changes in family dynamics and pension credits, or other couple-centred solutions; they actually increase the gap between married and lone mothers.

Different families: different solutions; "*but if we do not promote gender equality measures, we would suffer a backlash*".

Work and family balance models: are they adequate to the changing dynamics of the family and the labour market?

Shirley DEX mapped a few important models (generating income): Male breadwinner model; Male adult worker model; 1.5 earner (part time for women); Female model (both working part-time); "*in fact, the model of a heterosexual couple with children is the family form which has been the main object of research*".

It was argued that these models of family-work articulation should also include the female breadwinner model. In most cases, this might not be a choice but a constraint caused by the rise of male unemployment. What are the consequences of the expansion of this model? How can we change the role of the father? This is an important topic to be addressed from a policy perspective.

It was also recognised that family models are not static categories and that they must be approached through a life course perspective. For instance, many women leave the labour market when they have children. The cross-national comparison of these models, and the causes that underlie the formation of different gender regimes, is also an important topic to take into consideration regarding the new issues for the future agenda.

Care:

Another main issue raised in the discussion was the care issue. From this perspective, it was raised that the right to participate in care has to be implemented for men, and for women, and that the model of the adult full-time worker has to be rethought in what concerns gender equality and family life. However two major problems were also raised: 1 - How to pay for care as a strategy, a policy? How to implement policies that support care arrangements? This was considered as a main challenge for the future agenda in terms of policies; 2 - The problem of fertility as a backdrop for gender equality policies must therefore be taken into consideration from this standpoint.

Labour market – How the changing structure of the labour market might affect gender equality policies and gender arrangements in family life?

It was recognised that today people are facing new risks (insecure employment) and that thus "*we cannot recommend the breadwinner model because of the risks it encloses*"; new policies are needed in face of new individualised risks (divorce, unemployment, etc.); there is also an economic point based on sustainability: "*the state is unable to pay without contribution*"; "*as some researchers have shown the more insecure jobs are the more hours people are going to work*".

Integrating gender and family policies…

Another important issue discussed by participants relates to the need of integrating family and gender equality policies "*we must bear in mind if the gender equality aims are consistent or inconsistent with other policies, in particular family policies*".

A major problem that was raised is that policies are not integrated. Family policies are less advanced at the EU level than gender equality policies. There seems to be a GAP between gender and family policies.

"*The EU has not allowed strengthening family policies. The most successful are linked to the labour market. And it is easier to introduce changes on gender and family by arguing for childcare or flexible working*"; "*However, family policies will have its turn because of the new family forms*".

National, supranational and transnational issues.

Finally, it was also discussed by participants the question of transnational circulation of paid work. It was stated that the participation of women in the labour market must be seen as a transnational issue. Women are often allowed to work because they delegate childcare which also relates to the role of immigrant women and transnational inequality.

Methodological issues

- Gender policies were useful for data collection. But there is an important problem: the production of data on gender and families is linked to backstage policies. Research is decided by political instances and has to be monitored;

- Conceptualising multiple causalities (theory and methodology) for explaining not only policy making, but also the linkages between work and family life;

- Lack of comparable and longitudinal data;

- Lack of integration between different fields (intersectionality).

Major gaps and challenges for research

- Rethinking the models for equality and interconnecting them with the demands of the labour market;

- More research on how to regulate care arrangements;

- More research on the consequences of different care arrangements;

- The need to research men and fatherhood (e.g. statement on paternity leave);

- Lack of data on parents as a couple and generally on family forms.

Key policy issues

- Conceptualising gender equality for other types of families;

- More interconnections between gender policies and family policies;

- Reinforcement of policies that support care arrangements, also from the perspective of fertility and gender equality;

- Policies than promote and enable men participation in family care (e.g. paternity and fathers only leave, plus other types of leave over the life course in order to improve men's participation in family life);

- Regulation of part-time work policies from the gender equality perspective; payment, rights and general value given to part-time should be reviewed;

- Care policies and remuneration of unpaid work (how to pay for care as a strategy, a policy?;

- Look at unpaid work at home in terms of GDP contribution (recognised for social security coverage and pension entitlement as "self employment" – the revenue stemming from the overall fiscal household);

- European governments should facilitate the reinsertion of middle aged women or men in their late thirties and early forties into graduate studies after having cared for their children in their earlier years; Corporations, through tax incentives, should be encouraged to hire such older graduates;

- Monitoring policy making strategies, goals and backstage dynamics: gender and other issues (employment, fertility, etc.).

Workshop 7 – *Reconciling work and care for young children: parental leaves*

Chair:

Jeanne Fagnani, University of Paris I

Keynote speakers/initial discussants:

Fred Deven, Kenniscentrum WVG, Belgium

Daniel Erler, Familienservice GmbH, Germany

Rapporteur:

Daniel Erler, Familienservice GmbH, Germany

Stakeholders/Other Participants:

Anna Maria Comito, Coface-handicap and Co.Fa.As.Clelia

Cinzia Sechi, European Trade Union Confederation

Ghislaine Julemont, Centre d'Action Laïque - Belgium

James O'Brien, Westlink Consulting

Jana Jamborová, New Women for Europe

Joan Stevens, World Movement of Mothers

Jorma Sipila, Tampere University, Finland

Karin Wall, ICS

Lorenza Rebuzzini, Forum delle Associazioni Familiari (FDAF)

Nathalie d'Ursel, New Women For Europe

Sonja Blum, Austrian Institute for Family Studies, University of Vienna

Teppo Kröger, University of Jyväskylä

Organisation of the workshop and keynote speeches

There were two keynote speeches in this session. The first keynote speech was by Fred Deven (Kenniscentrum WVG, Belgium) who opened the session with a presentation on parental leave policies across Europe. According to Fred Deven, parental leave across Europe is a kind of an umbrella concept of what he considers an increasingly complex reality of policies and practices.

By doing international comparative work it becomes evident that there are substantial differences in European countries with regard to the length of leave, its payment (or non payment), the mechanisms of funding, the flexibility which is provided for users (or the inflexibility), eligibility and take up rates.

Fred Deven drew attention to two critical factors related to parental leave. The first one is replacement payment since it can range from earnings related payment up to a maximum of 100% (some countries have a maximum ceiling) to a flat rate payment or even no payment at all. There are many countries which can be very generous in the length of leave but do not provide replacement payment. The second one is eligibility which has been, according to Fred Deven, "*a little bit disregarded*". What he wanted to emphasise is that it is important to remain aware that eligibility is not as widespread as some people might think it is, even in those countries which are known to be the most generous ones in terms of paid parental leave arrangements (like Sweden, for example): "*even in countries which are known as the most generous ones, not everybody living and working in these countries is eligible to parental leave*". The fact is that eligibility is employment related in most countries (including Sweden). Therefore there are several categories of employed persons who are non eligible, for example, those who are self-employed, who have temporary contracts, who may work in a small size companies; there are also significant differences depending on public sector or private sector companies. On the other hand if a person is eligible the replacement payment might be "*very conditional on your prior working history, so if you have built rights you may get applicable or eligible for the generous payment earnings related but if you have just started or entered the country you have a flat rate payment*". Therefore Fred Deven stressed the importance of framing leave policies related to the issues of inequality and also democracy.

Among the main ideas presented by Fred Deven three proposals stand out. One is the need to contextualise research as well as policy leave arrangements within a broader frame in order to understand them properly. Leave policies are only one instrument for European public authorities to facilitate the reconciliation of work and care for young children, there are other tools like early childhood and education services, cash benefits and flexible working conditions. When trying to understand leave policies it is important to consider the different perspectives of the diverse actors involved: families, public authorities, stakeholders - social partners, NGOs - media (in terms of the images they produce about what is good parenting, for

example). It is also important to take into account that there might be different perspectives between family members, their interest may be conflicting, for example concerning the length of the leave period from the child's perspective which may be different from the interest of the working parents.

Another idea stressed by Fred Deven is the importance of having a research perspective on data collection regarding parental leave take up rates. Data is still collected by the administration which is responsible for the payment. He mentioned two sources of information on comparative data regarding leave policies in European countries: one is the data collection established by the annual review of the *International Network on Leave Policy and Research*[8] (which already includes about 30 countries, most of them European and some transatlantic); the other is the data collected through the questionnaire recently carried out by the Council of Europe on family policies (of which a significant part was on leave policies) involving 40 countries and from which resulted a data base on European family policy.

Fred Deven left a final proposal for thought: how to frame parental leave and leave policies within broader issues, how to conceptualise and how to implement types of leave in terms of care for dependent persons in a broader perspective which looks at the family life course? He emphasised the need to frame leave policies within broader issues such as the different stages of the life course and gave the example of the Belgium 'time credit system'.

Daniel Erler focussed on the German parental leave system and highlighted what he considers an important issue - "*the freedom of choice*" - an argument that according to him has dominated the (west) German family policy discourse for a long time "*families need to have a choice on whether they want to take time off and stay at home caring for the children or they (both mother and father) wish to return to the labour market*". His presentation ended by highlighting the impact of leave policies on family behaviour regarding childcare and going back to work, which also impacts on the increase of female participation in the labour market (as in the case of recent leave policy change in Germany).

In fact, in 1986 when parental leave was introduced in Germany the whole political debate was centred on enabling parents to "*freely choose*" to stay at home and care for their children as the main driver was the wellbeing of children and their emotional development. Between 1986 and 1992 parental leave in Germany gradually increased up to 3 years, two of which were paid (not very high) while at same time female employment decreased. The main point Daniel Erler wanted to

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[8] See http://www.leavenetwork.org/

stress is that talking about "*free choice*" means offering several alternatives, thus also including childcare facilities in the scenario of options for parents: "*if you look at the leave scheme and there are no childcare services then there is no free choice*". In the case of Germany there was an incentive from moving out of the labour market but there was not really a choice for families because there were almost no childcare services for children between 0-3 years old. Only recently, in the late 90's, there was a discussion about the pertinence of such long leave periods for mothers (leave was also for fathers but fathers' take up rates were very low around 2-5%) as prolonged labour market absences were also seen as having negative repercussions on future career developments for women. There was a political discussion on the need for adapting parental leave and giving more freedom to parents; fathers' engagement in childcare was also brought into the discussion. In 2007 a new law was introduced representing a radical shift from the previous basic idea that enabled parents to stay at home during the first 3 years after birth. The new law reduced the parental leave period though it increased payment: introduction of 12 months parental leave paid at 66 per cent (33 per cent for 24 months) of prior income plus 2 months of 'fathers only' leave, not transferable to mothers. The new law is based on two principles: one is to increase women's participation in the labour market (mother's returning to work after one year of well paid parental leave); the other is to motivate fathers towards more participation in childcare; overall the intention is to reduce parents' absence from the labour market.

Daniel Erler also made a point on the importance of involving fathers in parental leave time without penalising parental leave time for mothers, therefore the principle of extending leave on the condition of leave sharing was conceived in order not to penalise parental leave time. Instead of reducing the 12 months leave into 10 months leave if fathers did not take the two additional months, policy makers decided to keep the 12 months and give more two months paid parental leave in case of fathers/other spouse sharing. According to Daniel Erler, this policy had a return on increasing fathers' take up leave (20 per cent of fathers take the two months leave) as well as on the decreasing of mothers' period of leave. However a group of highly skilled women increased their leave period by taking the whole one year paid leave (before they used to return to labour market after a short leave period); on the other hand, childcare services are being developed which is really giving parents the so called freedom of choice for those parents who wanted to combine work and childcare services. Also employers were receptive due to the fact that women tend to stay out of labour market one year instead of three years.

Main Discussions and Contributions from Stakeholders

Successful work-family reconciliation strategies (including father's involvement in parental leave) require an integrated approach/multi-dimensionality of reconciliation between work and family.

From the workshop presentations and discussions it became clear that parental leave schemes are only one aspect of successful work-family reconciliation strategies, which require a multidimensional and integrated approach to the issues of time, care and money, if they are meant to effectively enable mothers and fathers to combine their work and family life.

What has been emerging quite clearly from research on parental leave schemes across Europe is that fathers will only start to use leave entitlements if it is well paid and at least partly made non-transferable. However, the effects of leave schemes are also strongly mediated by interactions with other social policy dimensions, e.g. childcare, child allowances, pension entitlements. Hence a comprehensive understanding of leave policy effects needs to control for numerous intervening factors, necessitating a holistic research and policy approach.

"Parental leave is the end result of policy considerations in the following areas: maternal health, health of the foetus, fertility policy, labour market policies, gender equality, children's rights, family policies, etc.".

Diversity and complexity of national leave schemes…

"While European Union directives and regulations have lead to some tentative convergence, leave schemes across Europe remain highly diverse reflecting diverse historical policy legacies as well as cultural preferences. It is important to respect and allow for differences because one cannot simply impose one system on countries with very different socio-economic contexts. At the same time, however, it is necessary to monitor the effects of national leave policies, e.g. their impact on labour market participation of mother and fathers, in order to counteract unintended or undesired consequences".

"Unfortunately, the diversity and complexity of national leave schemes renders it difficult to grasp their benefits and effects, for potential users and experts alike. For the latter, it is especially difficult to conduct comparative research because there is very little comparable data available and mostly data is collected directly by the institutions responsible for the administration of leave benefits, which are not necessarily concerned about the collection of comparable data".

"The European Union has today throughout the Union a policy and a legal framework for parental leave, but the member states are free to decide on the pay levels during that leave. For this reason the variation of arrangements is very wide".

Parental leave schemes and parents' freedom of choice:

All workshop participants seemed to agree that one of the crucial questions regarding parental leave schemes are parents' freedom of choice, i.e. enabling parents to choose between staying at home, for a longer or shorter period of time, to care for their children. However, it also emerged very clearly that parental leave schemes only foster true freedom of choice if they are complemented by a sufficient supply of external childcare solutions, offering affordable quality services. Otherwise, parental leave schemes merely serve as an incentive for parents to stay at home.

"If leave schemes are to serve as an effective enabler of both, mothers and fathers, choice to take time for the care of their children, then benefits need to be income related. For if they are not, many parents but especially fathers, who usually contribute more to the family income, will not be able to take up their entitlements because the related income loss is unsustainable".

"Leave schemes which effectively enhance the freedom of choice of both parents thus require income related benefits as well as readily available childcare services. Yet real freedom of choice also necessitates flexible working options for parents as well as a family friendly working culture within companies. Because if working parents are not offered the flexibility that suits the needs of their family or if they fear that taking leave will compromise their future earnings and career prospects, they are unlikely to use their entitlements".

Decision makers should *"respect parents' (mostly women's) choice between joining the work force or caring for their children and other dependent persons in their households or combining both. Parents' choice to dedicate time and effort to their families at the expense of not being able to work or not work full time must under no circumstance entail disadvantages for them"*.

Parental leave and involvement of fathers:

There was also a point on current proposals regarding the inclusion of fathers in parental leave in terms of father's only (obligatory) leave meaning that time it is non transferable time to mothers - the question on facultative versus obligated - *"the inclusion of fathers but not obligatory in parental leave means creating conditions for freedom of choice"*. The gender equality model that considers the 'active father'.

"Father's involvement in parental leave and the gender sharing of parental leave is strongly related to well-paid individual entitlement to parental leave. This entitlement only exists in very few European countries at present which means that father's involvement in parental leave is not being encourage, is not high in the political agenda".

Parental leave and social inequalities:

"*Income has an impact on the take up of the parental leave. Earnings related parental benefits has advantages in respect to parental leave producing social inequalities, for example in countries where salaries are very low people still do not have the free option of staying at home or return to work, so they must work; on the other hand high skilled and better paid persons are more likely to take parental leave, that happens also with fathers take up rates*".

Employers' perspectives.

The work environment is a crucial dimension of any successful strategy for the reconciliation of work and private life. Unsurprisingly, all workshop participants therefore agreed, that employers need to absolutely participate in the consultation processes on future family policy strategies because they are crucial stakeholders and without their collaboration all policy initiatives are likely have only limited effects. Effective work-life reconciliation strategies need to go beyond the mere compliance of national legislation and therefore employers need to be 'on board' at all stages of the consultation processes.

As employer perspectives and attitudes appear to be crucial it might be useful to gain some deeper cross-national insights on their positions. It may therefore be useful to commission a cross-national survey on employer attitudes, for example towards the perceived costs and benefits of leave or care policies. Some insights in this respect can be gleaned from existing survey data, e.g. the European Working Conditions Survey[9] or the European Company Survey[10]. However, none of these allow for an in-depth investigation of employer attitudes towards the very specific issues of work-family reconciliation policies.

Parental leave policies and parental leave take up in contexts of economic crisis.

"*Considering the current economic difficulties of all European countries it is also important to closely monitor the impact this will have on leave schemes and their utilisation. On the one hand it is known, the effects of leave entitlements are strongly influenced by the economic performance of a country, because in times of uncertainty people tend be more careful to take leave. On the other hand it is known that various countries are reviewing the costs related to leave schemes and are considering cutbacks in this area. If benefit levels are reduced this is likely to have repercussions on the take-up patterns of leave. There is an acute need for more cross-*

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[9] See http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/ewco/surveys/index.htm

[10] See http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/companysurvey/2009/index.htm

national, comparative research on the impact of leave policies, especially with regards to the labour market behaviour of mothers and fathers".

Parental leave policies over the life course:

"We should consider 'parental leave' in a broader context and perceive it as a part of an entire life course approach: how to use time during the entire life of a person…"

"A major question is how to conceptualise and how to implement types of leave in terms of care for dependent persons in a broaden perspective over the family life course? To frame leave policies into broader issues such as the dimension of the life course perspective".

It was given the example of 'career break system'/'time credit system' (Belgium) *"which goes beyond the narrow part of the first three months or the first year…it is the idea that over the life course of all your professional career you can drop out for a moment, to care for sure, but you don't have to be specific about your reasons you can just say I just want to and so you keep your rights re-enter the company…"*

Methodological issues

- Impact analysis studies: more cross-national (qualitative and quantitative) comparative research at macro and micro level on practices and impact of leave policies within countries (regional differences for examples) as well as between countries, considering mothers and fathers relations to the labour market;

- It is especially difficult to conduct comparative research on parental leave entitlements and take up because there is very little comparable data, so there is a need for more harmonisation in concepts definitions.

Major gaps and challenges for research

- Grasping the complexity of leaves and options and also understanding this in the context of class, gender, companies for which people work, regional differences, different cultures;

- Improve research on the take up rates of mothers and fathers (there is a lack of information not only on take up rates but also on the educational and socio-economical backgrounds of parents which take up leave; there is also a significant lack of information on total or partially unpaid leave arrangements; statistics are driven by the administration which is responsible for the payment, so it is not a research perspective on data collection);

- More research on company facilities as well as on and regional and local provisions of leave;

- More research on young women's family planning, namely their perspectives regarding transition into motherhood and their expectations regarding available leave arrangements and childcare facilities and labour market participation;

- More research on mothers' use of leave because having the provision does not mean that everybody uses it;

- Further research on the impact of 20 weeks maternal entitlement job protection, on a longer breast-feeding periods and child's immunisation rates;

- Further research on the connection between the long term low paid parental leave and the decrease of female participation on the labour market and some negative effects in female career prospects (also taking into account different levels of women's education and qualification);

- Commission a cross-national survey on employer attitudes, for example towards the perceived costs and benefits of leave or care policies; in-depth investigation of employer attitudes towards the very specific issues of work-family reconciliation policies;

- The European Union should work on the theme of diversity. What type of parents take up the leave: casual workers, permanent workers, part time workers, full time workers, persons with high, middle or low types of functions, people with a local or immigrant background, etc.;

- It would be also important to explore how fathering is being looked at by society and the labour market as well (what does it mean for a man who wants to care not just for one week or one month but really wants to care in the long term).

Key policy issues

- Employers need to absolutely participate in the consultation processes on future family policy strategies (effective work-life reconciliation strategies need to go beyond the mere compliance of national legislation);

- European Union could develop a set of targets for example "*Barcelona Targets for Parental Leave: for 2020 25% of all parental leave taken in the EU*

is taken up by fathers; all EU member states provide 9 months of parental leave at 66% of previous earnings";

- The European Union should develop a recommendation on parental leave, thus providing a sense of direction and encouragement for the member states. This could be done in a similar way as the Early Childhood Directive;

- Transfer the responsibility for the collection and standardisation of some standard statistics about national leave schemes (e.g. take up rates by subgroups, length and payment levels, yearly national expenditure) to the national statistics offices and Eurostat; Eurostat should collect statistics of the people taking up parental leave as it is done at the moment with regards to Early Childhood Services;

- Parental leave policies that really enable parents to choose must be interconnected with childcare availability, well paid parental leave schemes and flexible working conditions; a holistic approach;

- Policy making must integrate evidence-based recommendations (feedback from research on leave policies);

- Migrants must also be taken into consideration regarding leave entitlements;

- Policies should enable men to use more parental leave schemes ("*fathers will only start to use leave entitlements if it is well paid and at least partly made non-transferable*");

- Monitor the effects of national leave policies; much more systematic evaluation of policies because this represents a precondition for evidence based policy making;

- More equalisation in leave policy schemes between the public and the private sector;

- Leave policies should address the diversity of families – entitlement to parental leave by same sex couples;

- Parental leave should take the form of a wider concept like a kind of a 'life-course time-credit' enabling people to care from a life course perspective;

- The design of parental leave policies should take into account children's rights. Children's commissioner should be consultant in each country regarding national leave policies as well the Commission on Children's Rights in the European Parliament should also be consulted when the Parliament discussed the new directive in this area.

Workshop 8 – *Reaching out to families: the role of family associations and other institutions*

Chair:

William Lay, COFACE

Gilles Séraphin, UNAF - Union Nationale des Associations Familiales, France

Keynote speakers/initial discussants:

William Lay, COFACE

Luk de Smet, Gezinsbond – Belgium

Rapporteur:

Linden Farrer, COFACE

Stakeholders/Other Participants:

Anna Maria Vella, Cana Movement, Malta

Claude Martin, EHESP - School of public health

Dorottya Szikra, Faculty of Social Sciences, Eötvös University

Elisabeth Potzinger, Katholischer Familienverband Österreich

Francesco Belleti, Forum delle Associazioni Familiari (FDAF)

Josef Jelínek, Obcanske sdruzeni ONZ

Maria Hildingsson, FAFCE - Fed. of Catholic Family Ass. in Europe

Michela Costa, COFACE

Robert Anderson, EUROFOUND

Sven Iversen, Arbeitsgemeinschaft der deutschen Familienorganisationen (AGF) e.V.

Teresa Kapela, Związek Dużych Rodzin ''Trzy Plus''

Zsuzsa Kormosné Debreceni, National Association of Large Families – Hungary

Françoise Meauze, National Confederation of Catholic Family Associations – France

Maria do Rosário Mckinney, Forum Européen des femmes – Brussels

Leonids Mucenieks, Union of Latvian Large Families Associations – Latvia

Eric De Wasch, Gezinsbond – Belgium

Organisation of the workshop and keynote speeches

This session consisted mainly of statements (both prepared and informal) made by family associations present at the FAMILYPLATFORM conference. There was also a brief discussion on common points. However, there were unfortunately no representatives of research or policy stakeholder groups. Because the majority of the session was devoted to statements, this topic "*Organisation of the workshop and keynote speeches*" gives a synopsis of the different kinds of family associations present at the conference.

Gezinsbond (Flanders, Belgium): The first statement was presented by Luk de Smet (Director General of the Gezinsbond). Gezinsbond has one guiding principle: care for the material and immaterial quality of family life and the principle of solidarity and justice where the family and its members are concerned.

It has three aims:

1) to promote solidarity between families;

2) to protect the interests of all families, with special concern for large families;

3) to work towards a family and child friendly climate.

Gezinsbond formed in 1921 as the League of Large Families of Belgium shortly after the First World War. Then, it wasn't unusual for families to have ten or more children and as such it strove to represent the needs of large families. It did not originate from previously existing family associations but instead formed from a small group of people who launched the idea of a family association which called upon local people to recruit families as members. It went on to be a co-founder of the International Union of Family Associations (the IUFO – now the World Family Organisation) in 1948. Following adoption of the Treaty of Rome (1958) the European Region IUFO entered into a dialogue with the newly founded European institutions and as a result of this discussion and the new treaty helped form COFACE.

Today, Gezinsbond is a large non-profit making association with 280,000 members in Flanders and Brussels – all of which are individual families. It is a voluntary association, with 13,000 volunteers who are well placed to know the needs of families at a local level; volunteers are supported by 180 staff. At present, there are more female and older volunteers. It has a democratic structure, which is formed of close to 1000 local branches, regional committees, provincial committees and a general and an administrative council. Members are also consulted on issues via questionnaires and consultations. All types and kinds of families can become members, though most join just before or after their first child. Members are primarily middle-class but Gezinsbond is reaching out to families with 'an ethnic or

culturally diverse background', and those in poverty. This outreach is taking place through pilot projects, but can be challenging: hard-to-reach families are by their nature very hard to reach.

Gezinsbond organises social activities, educational classes and family services. Up to 80 to 90% of new parents receive a letter from Gezinsbond – with the addresses of new parents provided by local authorities. This letter, which at first is monthly is regularly followed-up and explains the development of the child from birth to early school age. In addition, Gezinsbond is involved in consultations with the government – and it has been known to organise demonstrations from time to time. Because it is dependent on families' membership fees and on a (limited) grant for its educational work, one of the big tasks is to maintain membership and recruit new members.

Eric de Wasch (Member of the Administrative Council of Gezinsbond) added a statement, concentrating on a number of additional areas. The first is the 'Family Impact Report', which examines the impact of all policies on different dimensions of family life: these reports - Gezinsbond argues - should be entrusted to the person(s) in charge of family policy and monitor all policy formation. The second was family modulation, which is direct government support to families. The third was good practice in consultation between employees and employers so as to tackle the challenge of reconciling work and family life.

Associations familiales Catholiques (France): The National Confederation of Catholic Family Associations (CNAFC) was founded in 1905 and currently has 35,000 member families spread over all of France. They have been a member of COFACE since 1958, and they founded the Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe (FAFCE) together with Familienbund der Katholiken twenty years ago.

Françoise Meauze argued that family associations are effective when they are representative and consist of a membership made up of volunteers. They should be open, public, transparent, and must represent families in all geographical areas. They should also be officially recognised. Family associations should propose ideas that correspond to families' needs, and react to legal and political evolutions that have an impact on families. As a result of their combined work, associations can be thought of as think tanks for presenting new ideas and testing them in a concrete and experimental way. They are also important for their political lobbying work, and in promoting family mainstreaming.

We were reminded that Article 16 of the Lisbon Treaty enhances dialogue with civil society – and that family associations should search for increased acknowledgement. Mention was made of COFACE, FAFCE, and the World Movement of Mothers as organisations promoting families, as well as the Family Intergroup within the European Parliament, and the Commission on social issues, health and family of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. These actors rely on instruments

such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (Articles 3 and 16), the European Social Charter, and the European Treaties.

In conclusion, Ms Meauze stated that family associations should be afforded legal recognition in all European countries so as to enhance family mainstreaming. An emphasis was put on subsidiarity and also on the difference between family policy (a preventative one) and social policy (a reparatory one).

UNAF (Union Nationale des Associations Familiales, France): In France, the government has created a state body for family associations – UNAF. UNAF receives funding from the state and consists of around 8,000 associations, representing 800,000 family members.

It has four missions:

1) to provide public authorities with opinions on family related issues and propose measures in all aspects of family policy;

2) to be the official representative of all families in dealings with public authorities;

3) to deliver family services that the State has tasked them with;

4) to uphold the material and moral interests of families declared by the law.

Forum europeén des femmes (Brussels – Belgium): A much younger organisation, though no less active, is the Forum europeén des femmes – an organisation which is 6 years old and based in Brussels. Most of its members are expatriate professionals in Brussels. It is active on reconciling work, family and private life and aims to promote a more healthy work and life balance, with the belief that strong families are the beginnings of a cohesive society and that wellbeing and families start with care in the family. They say it is impossible to work for a cohesive society without the presence of strong families.

Cana Movement (Malta): Cana Movement developed in a strongly Catholic Country, providing services to members. It has 1,000 volunteers - in a country of only 400,000 people - who help organise activities and sustain the movement. They organise marriage preparation courses and counseling services that the Maltese government now relies on Cana Movement to provide.

The Ombudsman for Parents' Rights (Poland): In Poland, one of the main institutions mentioned in the constitution is the family but there is almost no family policy. Governments' experience of the family is predominantly negative - having contact only with families through social services (who may face problems such as alcoholism or domestic violence). The Ombudsman for Parents Rights' in Poland

formed very recently, looking to change this perception and calls for parents to be involved in dialogue with government on family issues.

Run with minimal resources and 100 active volunteers, it is nevertheless able to organise street demonstrations of more than 30,000 people on the internet.

Main Discussions

Family organisations in the new Member States are facing particularly harsh times. Families were previously supported by the Communist regimes but have since had such support withdrawn. Families in the new Member States have only had a few years to build up family associations to represent them, and the current crisis and the relatively undeveloped civil society puts them at additional need of support. In Latvia for example, the Family Ministry was closed and family support was cut.

Leonids Mucenieks of the Union of Latvian Large Family Associations, called for the following kinds of support:

- financial support from national governments and the EU to more strongly support families during this time of crisis;

- to see greater progress at the EU level in the field of practical consolidation of Family Rights and Family Friendly Policies;

- development of European grant programmes, which could help family associations to organise activities without co-payments.

Family organisations from the older Member States can be well placed to offer some support to younger family organisations in terms of information sharing and capacity building, but increased support may be needed at an EU level. The point was also put forward in the discussion and during the plenary session that family organisations can exert pressure on national, regional, or local governments by taking concerted action at an EU level. This can embarrass national governments to take action. The European Alliance of Families helps promote EU level cooperation and should be strengthened.

Major gaps and challenges for research

Many of the policy issues and research questions were implicitly rather than explicitly discussed in the above mentioned statements. However, a number of policy and research issues were discussed and others can be distilled from the discussions and statements:

- Evaluation of effective practices for reaching out to different families (development and interchange of good practices);

- Research on the constituencies of family associations: what groups of people are represented in family associations (e.g. ages, ethnicity, religion, geographical region, etc.) and which group(s) are not;

- The role of family organisations in influencing policy;

- More research on the role local government on the quality of pedagogical issues concerning interconnections between schools, family, local government and neighborhood;

- Data collection and inclusion in national statistics on the number of men and women caring at home for their dependent family members.

Key policy issues

- Mainstreaming family as a component of EU social cohesion policy ("*in every policy a questionnaire should be fulfilled in order to see whether the policy has an influence on families*");

- Greater EU support for family organisations (financial);

- More progress on EU level in the field of practical consolidation of Family rights and Family Friendly Policy;

- The introduction of a family impact report/assessment as a standing and compulsory part of the political decision making process. This family impact report should give visibility to the repercussions of measures taken on the welfare and wellbeing of families. With this family impact report it could be possible to obtain an insight on the impact of measures on the development opportunities for families. Possible corrective measures must be the result of this procedure;

- The introduction of family modulation in direct financial government support to families as well in the conditions that legally apply to the use of government facilities and services. The principle of family modulation implies that a family's ability to cope financially is not determined by household income, but also by the number of persons that must live from this income;

- To propose a large family European card for children who already benefit from it in their own country, extending its benefits to all EU countries;

- Greater recognition and consultation with family organisations;

- Taking the family dimension of all policies into account and evaluating their potential impact(s);

- Consultation between employees and management is key to addressing the challenges of reconciling work and family;

- Expanding the initiative: "*charter for a family-friendly company*", an arrangement to be signed by both employer and staff representatives - either a trade union or individual staff members making up half the total personnel - an agreement based on a set of principles that should be followed by employers: respect for an employee's role in their family; equal opportunities for both genders within the company and openness to dialogue; respect for existing labour and law regulations; clear and transparent communication and implementation; integration of family-friendliness into business plans and; flexible working arrangements such as working from home ('teleworking') or part-time;

- Policies to promote parent's involvement in their children's schools;

- Policies that recognise the social and economic value of unpaid work devoted to family care by establishing social and educational rights (the latter in terms of 'life long learning').

Part III – Final Comments: Selected Elements on the Research and Policy Agenda

Drawing on the discussions, statements, keynote speeches, and other written documents and notes produced or reviewed during the Conference, our interest in this final section is to pick out some of the main research topics/themes and issues which were suggested or argued for by the participants during the three-day conference in Lisbon. Given the wide range and number of suggestions, the aim here is to register and summarise these proposals, with a view to future debate, rather than to set out overall recommendations. The selected elements are based on the overlaps and broad lines of force which emerge from the conference and the previous chapters of this report.

Topics and issues for the research agenda – selected elements

Topics and issues identified as important for the future research agenda include the following:

1. **Contemporary parenthood, motherhood and fatherhood**. The need for a deeper understanding of parenthood and parenting is a topic which emerges repeatedly as a key issue for future research. Taking into consideration the <u>future of parenthood amongst the young generations</u> in Europe and across the new plurality of families is seen as a major objective for both research and policy. This implies focusing on a wide range of themes and issues, such as: examining the new models of motherhood and of fatherhood (including legal aspects and their implications as well as the values and practices of parenting types); understanding how young people plan and envisage parenthood; seeing how the new models relate to gender and social inequalities, as well as to different family forms and conjugal divisions of paid and unpaid work; analysing the social processes that promote or hinder father's involvement in parenting practices; understanding how parents deal with illness and disability in children; seeing how media can be a tool to help parents in parenthood and how they incorporate media in their daily life; analysing the dissemination, across Europe, of these models and capturing the role played by different family polices in promoting theses changes/models.

   Strongly connected to the topic of contemporary childhood and family wellbeing, demand for research on contemporary parenthood is also closely intertwined with the need for a greater understanding of how children's lives and outcomes are currently affected by the forms and changes both in motherhood and fatherhood (see below Topic 2).

2. **Children's experiences, trajectories and outcomes.** Another major trend of the discussion on the gaps and challenges for future research focussed on children in families, in particular on the need for more understanding of the <u>experiences of children and of how their lives</u> and outcomes are affected by different elements of their family lives (e.g. the effects on children of living in different family structures or within diverse parental and educational models; the effects on children living with parents who either both work full-time, or one works full-time and one part time, or only one works; or with parents with atypical time schedules; the experiences of parent's partnership breakdown; the experience of living in poverty for short or long durations, in institutional settings and in families with different educational, economic and social resources; the effects of experiencing different types of childcare – at different ages and with different amounts or hours of care; understanding how media, in particular internet usages (but also other kinds of media, such as television, advertising, etc.) is shaping children's lives.

Moreover, the broad issue of children's lives and outcomes came across frequently as a cross-cutting pathway into research on family life, in particular since it could encourage:

a) research projects interconnecting different fields and dimensions of family life: parenthood, working couples/mothers, schooling, child development and outcomes, social inequality and poverty, the impact of new technologies and changing living environments or communities;

b) research projects focusing simultaneously on various family issues which may be seen as tensions or dilemmas of contemporary families with children (e.g. how to combine the interests of children, working parents and the labour market; finding quality solutions of care for young children below age 3; time use and quality time with children; the meaning of choice in family life; family management of media, schooling and parenting; positive or negative effects of different types of childcare).

For example, one proposal for a research project along the above-mentioned lines suggested a comparative cross-national study on different types of maternal employment and care (working full-time, part time, caring at home for a short or long duration, etc.) and how children's and parents' lives are affected by them, in the context of diverse welfare and gender equality regimes. Other proposals for cross cutting research programmes put forward the need for studying the effects of organisational change in the world of work and daily life (hours of work, workload, geographical mobility, multilocality in daily life, etc.) on the life rhythms of children according to age groups (pre-school, 6-12 years, adolescents).

In summary, more knowledge on the evaluation and the impact/effects of different forms of child care, as well as their linkages to maternal employment, labour market constraints, parental leave systems and changing gender equalities/inequalities within the family, was generally considered as an important challenge for both research and policy-making.

3. **Changing family composition, structures and networks.** More <u>understanding of old and new family forms and their development over time, of why differences in family composition and structures occur and why their extent differs across EU countries</u> was also identified as an important issue for research and policy. Discussions on research gaps in this field pointed repeatedly to the following methodological problems: the lack of longitudinal and cohort data; difficulties in dealing with the concepts and indicators of family living arrangements, particularly those addressing the existing plurality of family life and relationships; a too strong a focus on the nuclear family model and the household unit, and on aggregate national data rather than variations between different social and regional groups; problems of comparability of European family data bases with other data bases in order to understand the influence, at cross-national level, of welfare, labour market and educational systems.

Four interrelated research topics within this fundamental field of research on family composition over time and across social groups and national contexts may be underlined:

- The need for further and improved data on family composition and structures, their plurality within national contexts and across Europe and the main factors shaping variation and diversity. Deeper understanding of new family living arrangements (e.g. blended families, same-sex unions, families separated by migration, lone fathers, joint custody families) and of the differences between social, cultural and regional groups are seen as major challenges for future research on this topic;

- Moving beyond the focus on the household unit and the standard nuclear family model, the need for research to grasp the diverse meanings and new notions of family and family relationships in late modernity, in particular the sets or configurations of close relationships, which may include a variety of important alternative ties providing support and resources (e.g. friends, relatives beyond the household unit or from other generations, colleagues);

- Drawing on a life course perspective, greater understanding of family formation, transitions and trajectories, including the decision-making processes and reasons underlying or delaying family transitions (such as the transition to parenthood, to conjugal life or to divorce), as well as the

linkages between different types of life trajectories, in particular between career and family trajectories; family transitions and decision-making processes must be understood in the context of specific historical, social, normative, institutional and generational contrasts;

- Understanding the differential effects of major demographic trends (e.g. rising life expectancy, low fertility, increasing geographical mobility and immigration) on family forms, intergenerational relations and networks over the life-course.

4. **Post-divorce family forms and relationships**. Analysis of <u>post-divorce situations</u> is another major issue for future research and policy-making pinpointed by several discussions, presentations and documents. After divorce, 'joint custody' is becoming more and more frequent due to changes in legislation in most European countries. There is a need for research on the diverse patterns of these post-divorce family forms and how couples negotiate and decide on the new living arrangements; but there is also need to further the analysis of their impact on mothers' and fathers' professional life/careers, on child care arrangements, and on children's experiences and outcomes.

5. **Families, Social Inequalities and Living Environments.** The issue of <u>families and social inequalities</u> also emerges as a cross-cutting issue, mainly due to the fact that research on families during the last few decades has tended to neglect analysis of social, cultural, spatial, environmental and regional differentiation and its consequences on family life and experiences. Four interrelated research topics within this fundamental field of research were suggested as important:

- The need for a deeper understanding of social inequalities between families: for example, how long do families/different types of families spend in disadvantage or poverty; why and how do some types of families accumulate advantages (e.g. well-paid dual career couples) or disadvantages; what are the experiences and effects of living in disadvantaged families, environments or difficult housing situations on family members; how and why does the extent of social inequality between families and its effects on family outcomes differ across European countries;

- The need to understand more about the role of families in reproducing social inequality across the generations, thus affecting children's life chances. Transmission of social advantage and disadvantage via the family may take place both at material and socio-cultural levels: for example, how do unequal endowments of 'cultural capital' in families influence children's acquisition of social and educational skills, and how do differences in income levels or social capital impact on the living

conditions of children and on the inheritance of economic capital and material advantage over the life course;

- The need for greater understanding of the linkages between policies and inequalities between and within families, by examining not only how policies help to check worst inequalities produced by differential access to resources and living environments, but also how and in what ways policies are likely to challenge the entrenched advantages some families have and pass on to their children. Research on the causes and consequences of social inequalities and how policies tackle them is key to understanding the relative position of disadvantaged families and families at risk of failing;

- The need for research on specific types of families which may be more vulnerable to disadvantage, poverty or difficult living or housing conditions. Given the increase in immigration, as well as increased mobility in general within the EU, research on Immigrant Families and on families from minority ethnic groups was considered by participants as a major and urgent challenge for research and policy-making. Research is still scarce on immigrant families and on the changes, positive or negative, resulting from migration. Relevant issues for research which deserve more attention include: the role of families in promoting the integration of its members; types of spatial concentration or dispersion and how this affects how immigrant families settle and how the host city copes; immigration and care (how immigrant families manage work and care, the effects of transnational care practices on family life, and the crucial role that immigrants play today as care workers of dependent people in Europe); developments in immigration policies, in particular the restrictions to family reunion, and their impact on family life; understanding how subsequent generations are coping, who succeeds and who fails to thrive in different local, national and cross-national contexts.

6. **Doing family**: family interactions and processes, over the life course. Another major trend of the discussion on gaps in research stressed the importance of focusing on the interactions between people within the family and on their practices in everyday life and over the life course. From this perspective families are seen to be constructed through multiple forms of interaction (from body and emotional interactions to cognitive, social, spatial and media-related interactions; from interactions involving cohesion and solidarity as well as conflicts, demands, stress, or even violence). A major challenge for research within this approach is therefore to understand the daily and biographical shaping of common life as a family, built upon the interactions and daily life of the different members of the family (of conjugal partners, children, fathers and

mothers, siblings) and of the couple/family in relation to significant others and wider societal contexts.

This approach to family studies points to a variety of potential, interrelated themes which are important for both research and policy-making. For example: examining family practices and negotiations of paid and unpaid work and the existing gap between attitudes and practices regarding gender roles; understanding the diverse procedures and models of negotiating and practicing parenthood and partnership, and also of specific events or family transitions (illness, death, leaving home, birth of a child, etc.); understanding the interactional dimensions (emotional, physical, cognitive, social) of motherhood and fatherhood; understanding support practices and mutual care between family members and different generations; studying the effects of different interactional factors on the wellbeing of families and couples (for example, to what extent is a rich relational environment, implying support practices and ties beyond the nuclear family, an important factor for conjugal and family wellbeing? Even beyond divorce?); understanding how families, in particular children, are dealing with high-conflict situations; comparing practices and daily life over the life-course in diverse types of families, such as blended families, large families, lone parent families, migrant families or same-sex couples.

7. **Ageing, families and social policies**. Ageing was recognised as one of the main challenges that European societies and families will be facing over the next decades. Research issues discussed and suggested during the conference cut across a variety of questions and topics. Understanding changes in the life trajectories and transitions of people aged fifty and over (e.g. transition to new partnerships, to postponed or anticipated retirement, to grandparenthood, to dependency on others in daily life), in the context of different labour market and welfare contexts, was emphasised as a first important topic for research.

Other key issues for research included the following: understanding intergenerational support and solidarity, from the perspective of elderly persons both as care receivers and as caregivers; understanding how active ageing is impacting on support for dependent persons; identifying the values, practices and important contributions of grandparenthood; understanding the interconnections between ageing and migration (immigration as a factor which slows down the process of ageing; the relationship between the growing needs of elderly care in ageing societies and the immigration of female care workers); examining the sustainability of different care arrangements (e.g. carer's needs for training, respite, cash benefits, services, support for reconciling work and family life, use of new technologies); understanding the subjective dimensions of care (how care and the problems of caring are experienced by caregivers and by care-receivers); a deeper understanding of the new trends in social care for the elderly, whereby flexibility and complementarity (between state, market and

family; between paid and unpaid care; between solutions developed at local or national levels) are being highlighted and developed in most European societies.

8. **Family policies**. Analysis of family policies and of the intersections between family policy and other policies (e.g. gender equality, labour market, educational, social security, immigration), both at local, national and cross-national levels, is a cross-cutting issue which was raised in all the sessions of the conference. Many proposals and thoughts on the challenges and research gaps may therefore be found in the summaries of the focus groups and workshops presented in the first parts of this report. Overall, more analysis and comparisons on family policy trends in Europe were recommended. The following selected elements seek to highlight some of the more specific topics, dimensions or gaps in research on policy which were identified as important:

- A deeper understanding of how family policy is culturally, institutionally, politically and historically embedded in each country; in particular, the need for more research on how the developments of national policy measures are being shaped by differences in socio-political pathways, regulatory frameworks and financing possibilities;

- Understanding changes in family policy measures and priorities as a response to contemporary societal challenges and difficulties, in particular the economic crisis;

- The need to improve and renew existing typologies of family policies in general, as well as the typologies related to specific fields of family policy, such as institutional frames, parental leave systems, social care patterns, cash and tax benefit systems. In this field, the need to move beyond dichotomical concepts such as familialisation/defamilialisation, formal/informal, choice/no choice, north/south divide, etc., towards a better understanding of the on-going complexities of family policy developments (for example, the complex ways in which policies are currently mixing and balancing formal care, informal care and immigrant worker care in order to provide care for older persons more effectively);

- More understanding of the rationales and consequences of some of the more recent and sometimes controversial developments in policies, such as: cash for home care versus daycare for children below age 3; increase in maternity leave versus increase in paternity leave and measures to promote gender sharing of parental leave; universal versus selective family allowances;

- Greater understanding of the linkages between policy measures/entitlements and family ideals and practices. For example, the

need for further data on the practices and consequences of parental leaves (coverage rates and uses of different leaves, decision-making processes and strategies underlying use, parents' and other actors' perspectives on different types and consequences of leave);

- Compensating for longstanding gaps in research on family policies. There is less research on care services for the elderly and the reconciliation of work and caring for elderly persons than on child care; not enough attention given to the importance of a life course perspective for the framing of policies; less data on tax benefits; less attention given to the quality (and the quality standards) of services than to the quantity; less attention given to the perspectives and measures implemented at local or regional levels and by employers; not enough attention given to the evaluation of existing policy measures and the need for developments in the tools (new types of services, leaves, etc.) of family policies; little attention given to the perspectives of policy-makers and to how and why evidenced-based policies are being developed; there are countries which are systematically under researched;

- The need for greater understanding of the role and contributions that different types of NGOs and family associations are making today and could make in the future, in the context of different national and cross-national frameworks, to the building up of support for families and policy-making.

Annex 1 – Conference Programme

Thursday 27 May Day 3

THIRD PLENARY SESSION (Auditorium)

9:00 – 10:15	**Feedback and Reporting from the Workshops on Key Policy Issues by Rapporteurs** Chair: Krzysztof Iszkowski, European Commission Rapporteurs: Workshops 1, 2, 3 and 4 Questions/Comments
10:15 – 10:45	**Coffee break**
10:45 – 12:00	**Feedback and Reporting from the Workshops on Key Policy Issues by Rapporteurs** (cont.) Chair: Krzysztof Iszkowski, European Commission Rapporteurs: Workshops 5, 6, 7 and 8
12:00 – 13:00	**Results of the Foresight Exercise** Olaf Kapella, University of Vienna Anne-Claire de Liedekerke, World Movement of Mothers Chair: Uwe Uhlendorff, Technical University of Dortmund
13:00 – 13:30	**Close of Conference** Pierre Valette, European Commission DG Research Members of the Advisory Board Uwe Uhlendorff, Technical University of Dortmund
13:30 – 14:30	**Lunch at ICS** (5th floor)

RESEARCH ON FAMILIES AND FAMILY POLICIES IN EUROPE

A CRITICAL REVIEW

CONFERENCE

25 - 27 MAY 2010
ICS - INSTITUTO DE CIÊNCIAS SOCIAIS,
UNIVERSITY OF LISBON

SOCIAL PLATFORM
For the wellbeing of families
in Europe, today and tomorrow
http://www.familyplatform.eu

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
European Research Area

SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

Funded under Socio-economic Sciences & Humanities

Tuesday 25 May Day 1

8:30 – 9:00	**Registration of participants**
9:00 – 9:30	**Welcome and Opening Session** (Auditorium)

Opening addresses:
Uwe Uhlendorff, Project Coordinator, Technical University of Dortmund
Jorge Vala, Director of ICS, University of Lisbon
Chair: Karin Wall, ICS University of Lisbon

FIRST PLENARY SESSION (Auditorium)

9:30 – 10:00	Keynote speech – **"Changes in family life – issues for public policies"** Jean Kellerhals, University of Geneva Chair: Uwe Uhlendorff, Technical University of Dortmund
10:00 – 10:30	Keynote speech – **"State of the art of research on family life and family policies in Europe: major trends, cultural differences, specific developments of member states and research gaps"** Kimmo Jokinen, University of Jyväskylä Chair: Uwe Uhlendorff, Technical University of Dortmund
10:30 – 11:00	**Questions/Comments** Chair: Uwe Uhlendorff, Technical University of Dortmund
11:00 – 11:30	**Coffee break**
11:30 – 13:00	**Focus Groups on Existential Fields** (8 sessions in parallel)

Existential Field 1 Family structures and family forms (room 1, gr. floor)
Chair: Marina Rupp, University of Bamberg
Keynote speakers/Initial discussants:
Andreas Motel-Klingebiel, German Centre of Gerontology, Berlin
Maks Banens, University of Lyon
Anália Torres, ISCTE- University Institute of Lisbon
Elisa Marchese, University of Bamberg
Rapporteur: Elisa Marchese, University of Bamberg

Existential Field 2 Development processes in the family (room 5, 1st floor)
Chair: Carmen Leccardi, University of Milan-Bicocca
Keynote speakers/Initial discussants:
Carmen Leccardi, University of Milan-Bicocca
Karin Jurczyk, German Youth Institute, Munich
Rapporteur: Miriam Perego, University of Milan-Bicocca

Existential Field 3 State family policies (Auditorium)
Chair: Cristiane Rille-Pfeiffer, Olaf Kapella, University of Vienna
Keynote speakers/Initial discussants:
Kathrin Linz, Inst. of Social Work and Social Education, Frankfurt
Jorma Sipilä, University of Tampere
Rapporteur: Sonja Blum, University of Münster

Existential Field 4 Family, living environments and local policies (room 6, 3rd floor)
Chair: Ellu Saar, Tallinn University
Keynote speakers/Initial discussants:
Leeni Hansson, Tallinn University
Ellu Saar, Tallinn University
Francesco Belletti , Forum of Family Associations, Italy
Rapporteur: Epp Reista, Tallinn University

Existential Field 5 Family management (room 7, 4th floor)
Chair: Uwe Uhlendorff, Technical University of Dortmund
Keynote speakers/Initial discussants:
Marietta Pongrácz, Demographic Research Institute, Budapest
Michael Meuser, Technical University of Dortmund
Rapporteur: Veronika Herche, Demographic Research Institute, Budapest

Existential Field 6 Social care and social services (room 4, gr. floor)
Chair: Kimmo Jokinen, University of Jyväskylä
Keynote speakers/Initial discussants:
Marjo Kuronen, University of Jyväskylä
Anneli Antonnen, University of Tampere
Rapporteur: Teppo Kroger, University of Jyväskylä

Existential Field 7 Social inequality and diversity of families (room 3, gr.floor)
Chair: Karin Wall, ICS University of Lisbon;
João Peixoto, ISEG, Technical University of Lisbon
Keynote speakers/Initial discussants:
Colette Fagan, University of Manchester
Claudine Attias-Donfut, CNAV, France
M. Dores Guerreiro, ISCTE- University Institute of Lisbon
Rapporteur: Ceridwen Roberts, University of Oxford

Existential Field 8 Family, media, family education and participation (room 2, gr. floor)
Chair: Sonia Livingstone, London School of Economics
Keynote speakers/Initial discussants:
Ann Phoenix, Institute of Education, University of London
José A. Simões, New University of Lisbon
Naureen Khan, Commission for Racial Equality, London
Rapporteur: Ranjana Das, London School of Economics

13:00 – 14:30	**Lunch at ICS** (5th floor)
14:30 – 16:00	**Focus Groups on Existential Fields** (cont.) Contributions from stakeholders and social partners
16:00 – 16:30	**Coffee break**
16:30 – 17:30	**Focus Groups on Existential Fields** (wrap up)

Wednesday 26 May Day 2

SECOND PLENARY SESSION (Auditorium)

9:00 – 9:45	Keynote speech - **"Family policies in Europe"** Jeanne Fagnani, University of Paris I Chair: Karin Wall, ICS University of Lisbon Questions/Comments
9:45 – 11:00	**Feedback and Reporting from the Focus Groups by Rapporteurs** Chair: Olaf Kapella, University of Vienna Rapporteurs: Existential Fields 1, 2, 3 and 4 Questions/Comments
11:00 – 11:30	**Coffee break**
11:30 – 12:45	**Feedback and Reporting from the Focus Groups by Rapporteurs** (cont.) Chair: Olaf Kapella, University of Vienna Rapporteurs: Existential Fields 5, 6, 7 and 8 Questions/Comments
12:45 – 14:00	**Lunch at ICS** (5th floor)
14:00 – 16:00	**Workshops on Key Policy Issues** (4 sessions in parallel)

Workshop 1 Transitions to adulthood (room 2, gr. floor)
Chair: Carmen Leccardi, University of Milan-Bicocca
Keynote speakers/Initial discussants:
Barbara Stauber, University of Tübingen
Contributions from stakeholders and social partners
Rapporteur: Sveva Magaraggia, University of Milan-Bicocca

Workshop 2 Motherhood and fatherhood in Europe (room 4, gr. floor)
Chair: Kim-Patrick Sabla, Technical University of Dortmund
Keynote speakers/Initial discussants:
Margaret O'Brien, University of East Anglia
Arnlaug Leira, University of Oslo
Contributions from stakeholders and social partners
Rapporteur: Vanessa Cunha, ICS University of Lisbon

Workshop 3 Ageing, families and social policy (room 3, gr. floor)
Chair: Teppo Kroger, University of Jyväskylä
Keynote speakers/Initial discussants:
Claude Martin, CNRS/EHESP, University of Rennes
Claudine Attias-Donfut, CNAV, France
Contributions from stakeholders and social partners
Rapporteur: Sanda Samitca, ICS University of Lisbon

Workshop 4 Changes in conjugal life (room 1, gr. floor)
Chair: Jean Kellerhals, University of Geneva
Keynote speakers/Initial discussants:
Eric Widmer, University of Geneva
Brian Heaphy, University of Manchester
Contributions from stakeholders and social partners
Rapporteur: Rommel Mendes-Leite, University of Lyon

16:00 – 16:30	**Coffee break**
16:30 – 18:30	**Workshops on Key Policy Issues** (4 sessions in parallel)

Workshop 5 Family relationships and well-being (room 3, gr. floor)
Chair: Anne-Claire de Liedekerke, World Movement of Mothers
Keynote speakers/Initial discussants:
Gordon Neufeld, University of British Columbia
Contributions from stakeholders and social partners
Rapporteur: Jonas Himmelstrand, HARO, Sweden

Workshop 6 Gender equality and families (room 4, gr. floor)
Chair: Clem Henricson, National Family Planning and Parenting Institute, UK
Keynote speakers/Initial discussants:
Ilona Ostner, University Göttingen
Shirley Dex, Institute of Education, London
Contributions from stakeholders and social partners
Rapporteur: Sofia Aboim, ICS University of Lisbon

Workshop 7 Reconciling work and care for young children: parental leaves (room 1, gr. floor)
Chair: Jeanne Fagnani, University of Paris I
Keynote speakers/Initial discussants:
Fred Deven, Kenniscentrum WVG, Belgium
Daniel Erler, Familienservice GmbH, Germany
Contributions from stakeholders and social partners
Rapporteur: Daniel Erler Familienservice GmbH, Germany

Workshop 8 Reaching out to families: the role of family associations and other institutions (room 2, gr. floor)
Chair: William Lay, COFACE; Gilles Séraphin, Union Nationale des Associations Familiales, France
Keynote speakers/Initial discussants:
William Lay, COFACE
Luk de Smet, Gezinsbond, Belgium
Contributions from stakeholders and social partners
Rapporteur: Linden Farrer, COFACE

20:00	**Dinner with Fado at Casa do Leão**, Castelo de São Jorge (coach transfer from ICS at 19:30)

Annex 2 – Conference Participant List

Ada Garriga Cots	International Federation for Family Development
Agata D'Addato	Eurochild
Alexander Schwentner	UNICEF Austria
Ana d'Addio	OECD
Anália Torres	ISCTE - IUL
Andreas Motel-Klingebiel	German Centre of Gerontology (DZA)
Ann Phoenix	Institute of Education University of London
Anna Maria Comito	Coface-handicap and Co.Fa.As.Clelia
Anna Maria Vella	Cana Movement, Malta
Anna Záborská MEP	MEP - European Parliament Intergroup for the family, protection of childhood and solidarity between generations
Anne Charlier-des Touches	FEFAF
Anne-Claire de Liedekerke	World Mothers Movement - Europe
Anneli Antonnen	Tampere University, Finland
Anneli Miettinen	Family Federation of Finland (Väestöliitto)
Arnlaug Leira	University of Oslo
Barbara Stauber	University of Tübingen
Brian Heaphy	University of Manchester, UK.
Carmen Leccardi	University of Milano-Bicocca
Ceridwen Roberts	University of Oxford, Department of Social Policy and Social Work
Cinzia Sechi	European Trade Union Confederation
Claude Martin	EHESP - School of public health
Claudine Attias Donfut	Ageing Research CNAV
Clem Henricson	Family and Parenting Institute
Colette Fagan	University of Manchester
Daniel Erler	Familienservice GmbH
Dorottya Szikra	Faculty of Social Sciences, Eötvös University
Elisa Marchese	State Institute of Family Research at the University of Bamberg (ifb)
Elisabeth Potzinger	Katholischer Familienverband Österreich
Ellu Saar	Institute of International and Social Studies, Tallinn University
Epp Reiska	Institute of International and Social Studies, Tallinn University
Eric De Wasch	Gezinsbond - Belgium

Eric Widmer	University of Géneve
Florence von Erb	World Movement of Mothers
Francesco Belleti	Forum delle Associazioni Familiari (FDAF)
Françoise Meauze	CNAFC France (member of UNAF)
Fred Deven	Kenniscentrum WVG - Dept. of WellBeing, Public Health & Family
Ghislaine Julemont	Centre d'Action Laïque - Belgium
Gilles Seraphin	Union Nationale des Associations Familiales
Gordon Neufeld	University of British Columbia
Hana Haskova	Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic
Helena Hiila	The Family Federation of Finland
Heloísa Perista	CESIS
Ignacio Socias	The Family Watch
Ilona Ostner	Georg-August University Göttingen
Isabel Dias	University of Lisbon
James O'Brien	Westlink Consulting
Jana Jamborová	New Women for Europe
Jean Kellerhals	University of Géneve
Jeanne Fagnani	CNRS
Joan Stevens	World Movement of Mothers
João Mouta	Parents Forever Association
João Peixoto	ISEG - UTL
John Hebo Nielsen	Joint Council of Child Issues
Jonas Himmelstrand	Haro
Jorma Sipila	Tampere University
José A. Simões	Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas - UNL
Josef Jelínek	Obcanske sdruzeni ONZ
Judit Gazsi	Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour - Hungary
Julie de Bergeyck	World Movement of Mothers
Kaija Turkki	University of Helsinki and International Federation for Home Economics
Karin Jurczyk	German Youth Institute
Karin Wall	ICS
Katerina Cadyova	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech republic
Katherine Bird	Bundesforum Familie

Kathrin Linz	Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments in Europe
Kimmo Jokinen	Family Research Center, University of Jyväskylä
Kim-Patrick Sabla	TUDO
Krzysztof Iszkowski	European Commission
Lea Pulkkinen	University of Jyväskylä
Leeni Hansson	Tallinn University
Leonids Mucenieks	Union of Latvian Large Families Associations
Lia Almeida	ICS
Liliane Leroy	FPS/ COFACE
Linden Farrer	COFACE
Lorenza Rebuzzini	Forum delle Associazioni Familiari (FDAF)
Luk De Smet	Gezinsbond - Belgium
Lydie Keprova	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs - Czech Republic
Madeleine Wallin	Haro
Mafalda Leitão	ICS
Magdalena Kocik	University of Warsaw - Polish Society for Social Policy
Maks Banens	MODYS - Université de Lyon
Manuel Carlos Silva	Universidade do Minho, Portugal
Marc Goffart	European Commission, DG Research
Marek Havrda	European Commission
Margaret O'Brien	University of East Anglia
Maria das Dores Guerreiro	ISCTE - IUL
Maria do Rosário Mckinney	Forum Européen des Femmes (FEF)
Maria Hildingsson	FAFCE - Fed. of Catholic Family Ass. in Europe
Mariela Nankova	NM "Women and Mothers against Violence"-member of COFACE
Marién Delgado	UNCEAR
Marietta Pongracz	Demographic Research Institute Budapest
Marina Rupp	State Institute of Family Research at the University of Bamberg (ifb)
Marjo Kuronen	Family Research Center, University of Jyväskylä
Martina Leibovici-Mühlberger	ARGE Erziehungsberatung
Michael Meuser	TUDO
Michela Costa	COFACE
Michiel Matthes	Alliance for Childhood European Network Group
Miriam Perego	University of Milan-Bicocca

Nathalie d'Ursel	New Women For Europe
Naureen Khan	NSPCC
Olaf Kapella	Austrian Institute for Family Research, University of Vienna
Olga Tóth	Institute of Sociology, HAS
Owen James	World Mothers Movement - Europe
Philippa Taylor	CARE
Pierre Valette	European Commission, DG Research
Rada Elenkova	The Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation (BGRF)
Ranjana Das	LSE
Renata Kaczmarska	United Nations - US
Rita Gouveia	ICS
Robert Anderson	EUROFOUND
Rommel Mendes-Leite	Université de Lyon
Roumjana Modeva	NM "Women and Mothers against Violence"-member of COFACE
Sabrina Stula	Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments in Europe
Sanda Samitca	ICS
Shirley Dex	Institute of Education, University of London
Silvan Agius	ILGA-Europe
Sofia Aboim	ICS
Sofia Marinho	ICS
Sonia Livingstone	LSE
Sónia Vladimira Correia	ICS
Sonja Blum	Austrian Institute for Family Studies / University of Vienna
Stanislav Trnovec	Club of Large Families Slovakia
Susana Atalaia	ICS
Sven Iversen	Arbeitsgemeinschaft der deutschen Familienorganisationen (AGF) e.V.
Sveva Magaraggia	University of Milan-Bicocca
Sylvie von Lowis	World Movement of Mothers France
Teppo Kröger	University of Jyväskylä
Teresa Kapela	Związek Dużych Rodzin ''Trzy Plus''
Tiago Carvalho	ICS
Tijne Berg- le Clercq	Netherlands Youth Institute
Tobias Teuscher	Centre de Théorie Politique, ULB
Tomasz Elbanowski	Ombudsman for Parents Rights Association - Poland

Uwe Uhlendorff	TUDO
Vanessa Cunha	ICS
Vasco Ramos	ICS
Veronika Ágnes Herche	Demographic Research Institute Budapest
William Lay	COFACE
Yves Roland-Gosselin	CNAFC
Zsuzsa Gerber	Hungarian Women's Alliance
Zsuzsa Kormosné Debreceni	National Association of Large Families - Hungary

Annex 3 – Conference Opening Speech

Jean Kellerhals (Professeur honoraire de l'Université de Genève)

Lisbon 2010

Changes in Family Life – Issues for Public Policy

I would like to give you a survey of the enormous changes which have taken place in family life over the last fifty years from three points of view: the development of conjugal life and conjugal roles, changes in how children are cared for and raised, and finally changes in how families look after their relatives.

1.   CONJUGAL TIES

The striking thing about how conjugal ties have changed is their extreme mobility and fluidity today. Mobility, because in forty years divorce has gone from being something marginal and exceptional to being normal and predictable, affecting around 50% of marriages. And fluidity, because over the same period the figures for official marriages have dropped by about a third, not in favour of the single life, but rather of domestic partnerships in which there is no marriage, at least in the early stages. And fluidity too because many such unions are made and unmade without anyone noticing them, to the detriment of demographers and those responsible for family policies.

Paradoxically the family, despite the weaknesses arising from the changes I have just outlined, is more crucial than ever to people's emotional development and stability. In effect, in a highly mobile world, in which loyalties to professions, regions and religion are unravelling, in a world dominated by stress, competition and job insecurity, in a world where relationships are somewhat anonymous, suspicious, and cold, family ties today are the one place where we look to find identity, trust, and sharing. As many surveys show, most people today still put their hopes for a happy family life at the top of their list of priorities. Of course, there is no certainty of success, as we shall see, but it remains true that family ties are the primary response to the frustrations and rootlessness of modern life.

The next most striking thing about conjugal ties is the increasing diversity of couples' and families' lifestyles and projects. Over a few decades we have gone from a situation of off-the-shelf conjugality, in which young couples were bound by ready-made customs and obligations (engagement, marriage, role differentiation, procreation, education, etc.) to a situation of "bespoke conjugality," where each couple is invited to define the way they are going to operate: whether to get married or not, whether or not to have children, to have two jobs or just one, to do everything together or for each partner to

do his own thing, to stay together or to separate, to help with parenting or not, etc. In short, the triumph of individuation. Historically, it has been extremely rare for couples to have had the freedom to choose the framework within which their intimate relationship will develop. In the vast majority of cases, they had to obey the stuffy and reassuring norms of their social environment. It is important to realise that this is probably the first time that any and every individual has been able to control the "adventure of his private life."

This situation of bespoke conjugality has given rise to numerous types of "couple lifestyles," or relationship styles, if you prefer:

Some couples adopt the "Bastion" style: they do everything together, put all the household's resources into one common pot, they think alike and have a common life pattern. They keep their contacts with the outside world to a minimum, preferring the intimacy and security of their home life to the threats and uncertainties which too many contacts and too much information form the outside would bring. All this goes hand in hand with a very standardised, differentiated role structure and organisation of day-to-day life. Consensus is the key value here: a good couple is a couple without discord, with no apparent conflicts.

By contrast, a second conjugal style, the "Associative" – has couples insisting on the independence of each partner: each treasures his or her own hobbies, ideas, and finances, and there is frequent renegotiation of what is held in common and what each partner does. Here the high value attached to the individual is accompanied by a strong emphasis on communication. An associative relationship which works is a relationship in which the partners discuss their differences, rather than a union in which they are in agreement on everything. Contacts with others - for both information and personal reasons - is highly prized, and is seen as an indispensable resource both for enriching the couple's lives and for personal equilibrium. Male and female roles are not much differentiated, and there is considerable flexibility in the management of day-to-day life and timetables.

A third type of arrangement is the "Companionship" style: the couple share values and ideas and reach out to others on the basis of what they share. A good couple is one in which the partners are in agreement on a shared project, "fusional" in the sense that the notion of family overrides claims to individual autonomy, but at the same time they draw on the outside world for resources, and to stimulate and develop their relationship.

In a fourth type – the "Cocoon" style – the conjugal or family group is fusional to a significant degree: everything is shared, and the values of similarity and consensus are important. In its attitude to the outside world, the couple is to a great extent closed in

on itself. The couple jealously guards its intimacy, remaining relatively indifferent to the ways of the world. Within the relationship, there is not much role differentiation, just as the couple is not ambitious in its external aims. The key objectives are above all to be socially and psychologically comfortable, and to avoid conflict. In short, there is "cotton wool on every floor!"

Finally we come to so-called "parallel" arrangements. Here there is a fairly clear emphasis on each partner's autonomy (coming close to disengagement), but within a fairly closed family space which is somewhat hostile to the outside world, and is governed by strongly, even rigidly differentiated domestic roles. The couple live together, but they each have their own programme and their own routines. The emphasis here is on security and predictable behaviour.

It would be wrong, therefore, to characterise modern families by reference to a single dominant model. In fact what is striking is the way individual, conjugal and family trajectories have become so diverse. And these lifestyles vary considerably according to the social position of the partners: the more their material and cultural assets increase, the greater the emphasis on individuality, autonomy, and the revocable nature of the contract.

Having said this, this new freedom, which is exciting in so many ways, can also be stressful and conflict-ridden.

Repudiating ready-made models or finding themselves deprived of them, partners in a relationship often need to negotiate their common aims as well as their respective rights and obligations. There are three reasons why such negotiations often produce disillusionment, dysfunctional relationships, and occasionally violence. First, men's and women's interests are not necessarily the same. Secondly, often no-one knows what solutions are best for the good of the family (and there are arguments about this). Third and finally, people do not know how to negotiate with others, how to express their likes and dislikes, how to argue.

The visible outcome of the above are frequent upsets (problems such as misunderstandings between the partners, with families today finding it difficult to co-ordinate their roles, define their objectives, feeling disappointed, wanting to end the relationship, partners tending to get depressed, etc.). Almost a quarter of Swiss couples recently interviewed had three or more serious ongoing problems in their relationships, and over a third of them had frequent and serious arguments.

There are two things to be said about these conflicts. First, we may locate the risks which are appropriate to each end of the social scale. For poorer families, the typical risk is that the lack of resources which prevents family aims from being realised is

converted into frustration and feelings of guilt, which produce dissatisfaction and sometimes violence. For better-off families, the fundamental tensions lie in reconciling the constraints of family life with demands for individual autonomy. The second thing to be said is that in managing these conflicts there are three aspects, three "black marks", which have a negative effect on the dynamics of the couple: one is when the life of couple is too rigidly grounded on differentiated male and female roles, and they therefore find it difficult to adjust, the second is a refusal to open up to the outside world, when the couple is too closed in on itself, and this prevents the couple from drawing on outside resources to help solve its own problems; and finally an over-emphasis on individual autonomy and rights, which make the inevitable sacrifices of family life intolerable to the person demanding those rights.

And there is actually a third point to be made: the frequency of these problems or serious conflicts is affected by the social and economic position of the partners. In effect, the lack of power – be it financial, cultural, organisational – encourages extreme behaviour: either a rigid adherence to standards or its complete opposite, an "anything goes" attitude, a fear of outside influences, an overly fusional retreat into "we-the-family" which is presumed to remedy the disarray of individual identities. A certain amount of social power thus seems to be a significant condition for a balanced relationship, which is itself conditioned by a more successful education – provided that all other factors are under control!

Male and female roles have of course not been immune to the development of these made-to-measure forms of conjugality. All over Europe, over two-thirds of households today have dual male and female earners, and this remains largely true even after the first child is born. In the same way, in most European families the old patriarchal hierarchy has given way to the demand for joint family leadership. Whether you want it or have to accept it, formerly separate gender roles have given way to relatively undifferentiated roles. But not everything is simple! In actual fact this reconciliation of work and family life is often achieved by converting one of those jobs into part-time. Very frequently it is the mother's job, and she thereby weakens her career prospects and opens the door to upsetting the balance of family responsibilities. In fact therefore, despite some welcome changes, two-thirds of household duties and child-rearing responsibilities continue to be the doubtful privilege of women today. The main risk involved in part-time working is thus a lack of "recognition" from their partners and those around them: or, to use the vernacular, the woman continues to be a stop-gap…

2.   CHILD CARE

Let's move on now to the matter of children.

In the early 1960s there was a lot of talk of the "child as king", reflecting five prevalent beliefs: the number of children parents were having was fairly close to the ideal number of 2.4; children were being brought up in apparently fairly stable family environments, with a relatively clear division of labour; the motivation for having children was strong, widespread, and generally based on love and affection; people wanted a child for the enjoyment they expected to derive from the relationship, and finally they reckoned that the child's rights took priority over parental ambitions and desires.

This situation underwent radical change in the mid-1960s.

First of all, it is obvious that child care today takes place in a competitive scenario. The long decline in fertility rates since 1965 (from 2.4 to about 1.4) reflects an increasing tension between the deep desire for a special, primordial relationship with one's child and the fear of jeopardising one's professional future, which is deemed to be essential both to maintain one's independence or personal autonomy and for the intrinsic satisfaction of a professional career. This increasing competition is particularly noticeable when the woman has invested in a long period of training and career development. This means that there is now considerable ambiguity attached to the arrival of a child, and that for many families a feeling of sacrifice, of cutting off a part of themselves, sullies the joys of parenthood.

This competitive situation is readily visible in rising divorce trends, which I mentioned earlier. Many parents today judge it better to contribute to their children's happiness by breaking up a painful union rather than subjecting themselves to it. In over half of these cases, separations gradually produce a very clear withering of the child's relationship with its biological father. The model based on the idea that "Our relationship is finished, but let's hold on to (or work out) a good parent-child relationship" is by no means widespread, and can be observed more in well-to-do contexts than among the less well-off.

Divorce or no divorce, however, our recent work on Swiss families, "Moderation and Excess in Couples" ("Mesure et démesure du couple") has shown that the very high stress levels affecting modern-day couples have fairly direct repercussions on the problems they have with their children: the difficulty they have in taking on their role as parents increases in almost direct proportion to marital concerns; serious arguments with the child increase three-fold in relation to the extent of such marital problems; disturbances in children's behaviour also increase significantly, whether in relation to school work, use of free time, eating habits, mental alertness, etc. Marital problems and relational difficulties with children thus amplify each other.

Finally we might even say that the child competes with itself. On the one hand because the current notion of children's well-being and the needs associated with it are truly

Promethean: they have to have their own room, their private tuition, their sporting activities, their computers, their iPods and mobile phones, their quiet home, the full attention of their parents, etc. The parent who cannot give them all this feels guilty, a bad parent. On the other hand, the decline in fertility means that 1 or 2 children become the focus of parental benevolence and solicitude, but they also have a monopoly of ambitious and anxious control over their parents.

In other words, developments in fertility are directly related to changes in families' child-rearing styles. In the space of a century, the desire to pass on a "Faith" or a Truth - whether religious, political or moral - has given way first to the almost fanatical cult of effort and hard work as strategies for social success, and then to the highly sentimentalised and costly ideal of self-fulfilment and authenticity so often found today.

Several strong studies in recent years have condemned this movement as a transition from the child as king to the child as tyrant, accusing parents of being unable to say no, of providing instant gratification – for what reasons? For the sake of the child's happiness? Guilt at the fact that they have less time to give to the child? To compensate for the fact that their own upbringing was too rigid? Parents are accused of having been unable to instill in their children the idea of the long term, of plans for the future, of giving up present satisfaction for benefits in the future. These are studies which simultaneously underline the difficulties of reconciling the world of the family, saturated with "desire," and the outside world bound by calculation and rules (the world of competition, tests and investment).

While the authors of these studies correctly point to several dangerous excesses, and are thereby doing an important job of warning us of those dangers, they too often rely solely on clinical situations and reduce the diversity of child-rearing styles to just one model. In fact what strikes one first of all when reading the scientific studies on this topic is that the negotiator style of upbringing - with its stress on the child's autonomy, authenticity, creativity, and rights, its insistence on a pedagogy of motivation rather than of constraints - is often adopted with a healthy dose of moderation and therefore represents an improvement. It is only later on that its increasing hold often produces authoritarian styles of upbringing, with their stress on conformity, together with a pedagogical style based on obligations and prohibitions and a clear distance between parents and children - a style which continues to be found quite frequently in less well-off households - as well as those we have labelled "mothering" styles, with their stress on conformity and discipline, but with a strong element of collusion and significant sharing - in word and deed - between parents and children.

What is also striking is not the parents' refusal to exert authority, but the difficulty they have in doing so. The reason for this is that the relative power of parent and child has undergone profound change over recent decades. The adult who "knew" - because he

had experienced, in advance of the child, the social situations in which the child would in turn grow up; because he been educated, before the child, in the indispensable arts and sciences; because he felt reasonably confident that he could predict the future, or at least sense the way the world was going - has given way to a relationship based on shared powerlessness, or at least a lack of knowledge of the new world of image, technology, and globalisation. Moreover, new "youth cultures" have taken over (in fashion, music, language and gesture), bringing open competition to the codes of their elders. It is also not uncommon - especially among immigrants - to see a change of direction in the educational relationship, with the younger generation teaching the older one. So there is a very narrow dividing line between situations of mutual learning and early parenthood, with the two-way patterns of guilt associated with them. In sum, today's parents generally have a very poor understanding of the nature, the risks, and the demands of the professional worlds in which their children will have to struggle and survive. That surely renders their advice more hesitant, and their anxieties more intense.

These difficulties in exerting an authority which is nonetheless sought after are made even more complex by the frequent dissociation of the biological, legal and social foundations of parenthood. Divorces and blended families, in particular, have dissolved the common ties on which parenthood was formerly based. Legal responsibilities, blood ties, and living together no longer necessarily overlap. This produces a complex situation, in which three elements are juxtaposed: the likelihood, first of all, that different relationships will produce conflicting loyalties; then the rise of intergenerational negotiating attitudes: the child has to be "charmed" and "motivated" into self-esteem in order for the parent to feel entitled to influence him, and to succeed in doing so; and also, finally, the opportunity to invent "diagonal" relationships, that is to say relationships which are neither egalitarian nor authoritarian, and in which the accent is on mutual respect is a pledge of creativity.

3.   SHARING THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF LOOKING AFTER RELATIVES

Let's move on now to the matter of kinship networks, the immediate context of the nuclear family. It has often been claimed that the social trends of the last fifty years have led to a sort of atomisation and isolation of the nuclear family, for whom modern life has cut off links to their kin. According to this hypothesis, relatives can no longer effectively surround the nuclear family with their love, and so mutual support is said to have died.

If the results of our work on this topic are to be believed, this hypothesis could not be further from the truth. In observing families of the so-called "pivot generation" - those where the partners are between 50 and 60, whose parents are still alive and who often also already have grand-children, - we were able to demonstrate that in less than one-

fifth of cases was there significant isolation - a lack of contact and mutual support - between the family-household and its kin. In the majority of cases the opposite was true – there was contact and mutual support.

But we need to be specific about these kinship ties, in both qualitative and quantitative terms. From the quantitative point of view, we noted that the average number of "active" relatives - those involved in contacts or in mutual support - was 3 to 5 persons out of a potential average total of 12. These form a sort of "shield" for the nuclear family, a miniature society for its own use, a protective shell which the family hardly ever seeks to enlarge. This means that the average network activation density is never more than a quarter or a third. This proportion applies equally, in this age group, to brothers and sisters.

These "active" relationships form a network which is largely organised on vertical lines. In fact over a third of help is provided by one generation to another rather than between collaterals, at least if we make an exception for moral support, which in certain respects is a functional speciality of the lateral line.

This vertical network is also largely matrilateral and matrifocal. It is matrilateral because exchanges with kin are twice as voluminous on the mother's side (except for transfers of financial support) than on the father's side; and matrifocal because women contribute three to four times as much to maintaining this type of support than men do.

From the qualitative point of view, there are two essential aspects to these kinship ties. The first is the principle of affinity, in other words the activation of ties on the basis of an affective relationship: one is supposed to help and support those one loves, without worrying too much about ancient legal principles whereby one should help and support in equal measure all brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, and so on. Affinity or feeling is therefore often both the underlying principle and the overarching limitation on kinship relations.

The second qualitative aspect is the "normative ambiguity" of the principles of mutual aid to kin. By this I mean that the extent of the help one is willing to provide lies between a need for autonomy on the one hand, which demands that a good family sort itself out on its own, and the need for solidarity on the other, whereby there is a perceived duty to help those one loves. The immediate outcome of this is that the help we can actually see and observe is provided on an ad hoc basis, at times of crisis, when relatives are ill, unemployed, bereaved, or going through a separation, but most family-households in French-speaking Switzerland generally reject the idea of having a shared destiny in their day-to-day life (involving ongoing exchanges of goods and services, and sharing assets or salaries, etc.). So we are quite far from a new extended family. Of course, this mutual support is very valuable, because it is swift, highly adaptable and

multi-faceted (you cook a meal or help clean someone up, but in so doing you also keep in touch emotionally and are able to exchange important information). But it is still very limited, because few people envisage depriving themselves of basic necessities in order to help their relatives. The reason for this perhaps lies in the fact that no one is quite sure who should pay what, and how far they should go, when mutual support is involved: where several brothers and sisters are helping their parents, for example, should each sibling pay the same amount? Or should the richer ones pay more? Or should those who are closer to the parents pay more? There is a tendency to pass the buck! To the extent that the support being provided is fairly small, pride in being able to help and the joy of a certain family togetherness easily win out over feelings of sacrifice. But if the amounts of support become too high, that pride is accompanied by feelings of resentment towards the other brothers and sisters, quarrels soon break out, and the tree breaks because it is overloaded. Kinship support today is therefore no replacement for a crèche, a hospital, or a community medical centre.

Finally on this topic I would note that those family members who belong to support networks often feel (a) that their efforts are not properly recognised or rewarded by society, (b) that they are not always qualified to intervene as is actually required, and (c) that they are unable to decide who amongst their various relatives should be the co-ordinator, the assessor, the one who identifies needs, and so on. The result is that the support effectively provided often falls short of that which the network could potentially offer.

CONCLUSION

It is important to remind ourselves that there are several positive aspects to the development of the family over the last fifty years: freedom of choice in the matter of whether or not to bear a child, the relative 'de-linking' of sexuality and commitment (avoiding unions entered into too hastily for the "wrong reasons"), greater role flexibility, growing equality between men and women, the ability to dissolve without hatred a union which has become painful for all involved – these are all achievements of major importance. Of course, the price of such flexibility has been considerable family mobility (more divorces, more blended families) – but were the slavery, the frustrations and the cruelties of the past, which ensured or conditioned family stability, really any more moral and effective? And of course there are also new forms of anxiety and interpersonal conflict, even violence in some cases. That is the bitter price exacted by liberty. It has to be paid ungrudgingly and without panicking.

In fact, having weighed everything up, and drawn up an inventory of its past and present strengths and weaknesses, it seems to me that the family today is no less able than the family of the past to ensure personal fulfilment and the social integration of children. But times have changed, making everyone's lives more complicated, while at the same

time offering an exceptional new range of possibilities and choice. The new family identity, which is tied to its crucial importance for human and social development, demands that the community review its family policies so that it may truly, as far as possible, be a fulfilling and integrational locus of life. In this respect it is important to realise that there are three players in family success or failure: family members on the one hand, but also the immediate environment and society on the other hand. A number of research studies on families show that three predictors of fairly significant family difficulties are, first, social and economic vulnerability, which eats away at family harmony, and generates frustration and conflict, and even violence; secondly, family isolation from its kin, which places the burden of coping with and managing the inevitable difficulties of life on the family alone, with no outside support; and finally weak institutional support for families on a day-to-day basis - from crèches to advice and mediation for families - which tend to increase stress levels. The success or failure of a couple, of a family, is above all the success or failure of its relationship with its economic, social and institutional environment.

Social policy should be conducted on four main levels:

* The high number of divorces and the significance of family stress call for an intensification of family advice, mediation, and possibly therapeutic services. They also call for measures, as far as possible, to encourage parents to take on clear roles in the various types of blended family situations (this means helping to develop the relationships between children and their biological parents not residing with them, between cohabitants, etc.).

*The need for less differentiation of male and female roles, the widespread wish or need to pursue a profession as well as manage a household, and the major obstacles in the way of caring for children clearly call for intensive development - and possibly diversification - of the types of places where small children can be looked after, but also for longer parental leave and harmonisation of occupational, institutional and family timetables. There is also a need for greater efforts to define policies for geographical mobility (transport). More generally, these trends call for the reinforcement of policies promoting equality between men and women, without which the costs of such policies are once more likely to fall on wives and mothers.

* The very considerable cost of children's education calls for more firmly grounded tax benefits and financial support.

* In order that the extent and very considerable social usefulness of kinship support should not gradually wither away, there is a need to give it several forms of recognition: first in terms of taxation, but also in terms of benefits for those who devote long periods

of time to their relatives. Steps should also be taken to improve communication between social services professionals and family members who provide support.

It is easy to see that all this requires major investment! But this is unavoidable. There is nothing more futile than blaming the family for the shortcomings of a type of social development which more readily accepts accumulation, de-localisation, and unequal development than integration and durable development – and in the process judges the family to be selfish, irresponsible, hedonist and lax. The family cannot be society's moral haven. Rather, it more or less reflects it. Family life and social life are not independent of each other. If we refuse to take this mutual dependency into account, we risk paying a much higher price than the apparently high cost of political action.

FAMILY PLATFORM

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coface

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