

The Family in Europe Today Challenges and Perspectives

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A Renewed Interest in Family

In these last years the EU has been more and more interested in family issues.

WHY?

Therefore, also thanks to Eurostat and OECD statistics, we have now quite a good amount of facts on family in Europe.

Changes and Transitions in Family life

In the latest 50 years Family has undergone to relevant changes across Europe.

Indicators to detect those changes are:

- Demographical Changes
- Changes in Family composition
- Changes in Family transitions

Demographical Changes

Ageing Society: from challenge to opportunity

Postponement of First Childbirth

Postponement of first marriage

Out-of-Wedlock Births

Decrease in Fertility Rates

Ideal number of children vs. real number of children

Changes in Family Composition

Decreasing marriage rates

Increasing divorce-rates

Increasing re-marriage rates

Lone-parent families

Stepfamilies and “other forms” of family

Changes in Family Transitions

Prolonged presence of young people within the family of origin

New representation of parenthood among young people (esp. the so called “new fathers”)

Conjugal instability

The new role of grandparents

For a Critical Approach

“The Dark Side of the Moon”

Family has changed, not the nature and definition of the family

Sustainable Growth = Sustainable Family

Divorce: An Individual right...

Divorce has become, in the last Century, an individual right sanctioned by laws in all the European Countries, except of Malta.

The increasing rates of divorce are sometimes presented as an “enlightened development”, good for the complete freedom of the individual as well as a proof of the declining sorts of the so called traditional families.

Divorce: A Social Cost

Divorce is becoming to be considered a social cost.
What does it mean?

- Economic difficulties of divorced families
- Lone-mothers families (higher rates of poverty, more difficulties in balancing work and family life)
- Men confronted with greater emotional adjustment problems
- Economic and Psychological consequences on children
- Unhappy but stay married: more likely to be happy five years later

Family Policies: A European Debate

What is Family policy?

It is not merely a welfare policy,
nor even a policy against poverty.

Why a Family policy?

Not only for demographic reasons

For which Family?

Not all living arrangements are families

Family Policies: Promoting the Family

Positive criteria to build Family Policies:

Family Mainstreaming

Family Empowerment

Subsidiarity

THANK YOU!

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