Report on the futures task force workshop

Dimiter Philipov, Ina Jaschinski, Jana Vobecká,
Paola Di Giulio, and Thomas Fent

Report on the futures task force workshop

By Dimiter Philipov, Ina Jaschinski, Jana Vobecká,

Paola Di Giulio, and Thomas Fent

Abstract:
The Futures task force workshop in the framework of the forward looking activities in the *FamiliesAndSocieties* FP7 project was designed with the purpose to provide information on the scope of family-related issues that refer to a foresight view on the family in Europe. 25 stakeholders and 12 project participants expressed their opinion on four pre-designed questions formulated along a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) framework. The Workshop delivered a long list of notes and recommendations. When taken in separate many of these notes are not new but their value is that they have been selected as important among the numerous issues that underlie family life and change. These notes served as generator of ideas which brought to the front several important topics. One refers to vulnerable families, reproduction of vulnerability within families and breaking the cycle of reproduction. Vulnerability includes poverty, social exclusion, same-sex couples, single parenthood. Another important topic is child development; a third one refers to flexibility of policies.

Keywords: stakeholders workshop; family foresight; family futures; vulnerable families; child development

Affiliation:
Austrian Academy of Sciences/Vienna Institute of Demography (OEAW-VID), Austria

Contents

1 Background and main mission of the workshop

The *FamiliesAndSocieties* project includes a work package, the main aim of which is to construct a forward-looking view on the family in Europe. The primary purpose of this foresight activity, as specified in the project, is to provide information for stakeholders, and for policy-makers in particular. The package should therefore include views on the development of the family over the next couple of decades, along with the relevant policy implications. The requirements that the discussions focus on the future of the family and on policies that affect families permeate all of the forward-looking activities in the project, including the Stakeholders Workshop. In this report, we describe the preparation and the results of the workshop.

A forward-looking activity includes two basic components. Generally, one component consists of two or three scenarios that describe alternative societal developments, including changes in the economy, in social and cultural life, and in institutions. These scenarios are not forecasts; they can even describe unrealistic visions about the future. In this forward-looking activity, these scenarios are used to generate information about the potential consequences of these developments based on "what if" assumptions. The scenarios might, for example, explore what would happen if the current economic crisis continues for another decade; or what would happen if a sudden technological breakthrough brings about rapid economic growth.

The family is embedded in society. Thus, changes in societies lead to changes in families, including shifts in family constellations, in relationships between family members, and in the overall position of a family in society. At the same time, changes in families can also have an impact on societies. In a foresight activity, these interactive links can be described with "drivers": i.e., factors and family characteristics that conveniently describe the family and its embeddedness in societal life. They are the second basic component of a forward-looking activity. Coupling drivers with scenarios can elicit the desired views on future developments in the family.

There can be a number of different drivers, as families can be implicated in a wide range of interrelated changes in society, the economy, policies, culture, institutions and family constellations. Covering all of these potential changes is beyond the scope of a single study. Thus, the foresight activities in *FamiliesAndSocieties* must start with an *outline of the area* within which the future of families in Europe will be considered. This area is project-specific; as mentioned above, the goal should be to provide information to policy-makers. For each

area specified, a limited number of drivers are selected which change in the various scenario designs, and form the basis of the information generated about the future of the family. The specification of the area of interest regarding family change and the selection of drivers in the project is based on the following background factors.

1.1 Scenarios

FamiliesAndSocieties does not envisage the construction of scenarios. Instead, the project will use the outcomes reached in the EU project "*Flagship*", which was designed to generate a foresight analysis of societal developments in Europe up to 2050. This project is currently underway, and its continuously updated findings will serve as an input to the family-specific futures in *FamiliesAndSocieties*. Specifically, *Flagship* discusses a few scenarios of overall societal development that can be used effectively as scenarios for societal change in *FamiliesAndSocieties*.

Flagship considers a global reference scenario and alternative (qualitative) scenarios by using demographic, economic, energy and environmental models. Starting from a global perspective, the "Three Horizons" Model (THM) is used to frame the qualitative scenarios. The future management by this concept defines the Three Horizons as follows: "Horizon 1 is the space of the imminent future - somewhat determined by our present readiness, resource commitments and institutional capacities to make adjustments. Horizon 2 is the space where change is fully engaged and one's assets are actively shifting to be able to realize opportunities and to adjust to new pressures. Here it is desirable and usually possible to both forecast by examining the implications of trends and drivers of change; and backcast by rigorously asking what would have been required to create the conditions for the aspirations and vision of Horizon 3. Horizon 3 is the world of what if…what could be… and how we might recognize and realize opportunities; it is where powerful and compelling visions are described so they can enable leaders to break the inertia and fear of change that pervades most organizations." (Flagship 2nd Workshop Background Paper: 11[1]).

In the world of Horizon 1, the current prevailing system becomes less suitable over time. In contrast, Horizon 3 represents proposals for transformative change towards utopia. Horizon 1 is challenged by the new perspectives offered in Horizon 3. The intermediate space

---

[1] FLAGSHIP 2nd Workshop. Economic, social and environmental challenges and their feedback into integrated scenarios building. Nanterre (Paris), France - 13 June 2014, Observatoire Méditerranéen de l'Energie (OME). BACKGROUND PAPER prepared by CEPS with the support of SIGMA, based on contributions from: BC3, S4S, SEURECO and ISIS, http://flagship-project.eu/files/2014/06/Flagship_BP_pdf.pdf, download 16.06.2014.

of Horizon 2 is characterized by clashes of values in which there are competing alternative paths to the future, which are described in Horizon 3 and acted upon Horizon 1 (Flagship 2nd Workshop Background Paper: 12-13).

Many organizations see the first Horizon as a place to cultivate new capacities, to test strategies and to identify existing barriers or articulate problems which need to be resolved before we can move on the next Horizon. In this context, stakeholders are empowered to collaborate on shaping inputs for the third Horizon, where innovations at the technological, business, social and policy levels contribute to a global socio-ecological transition towards a new paradigm of global prosperity and sustainability. The world of Horizon 2 is turbulent and ambiguous, as change is well underway, and assets are being actively shifted to allow the stakeholders to take advantage of opportunities and adjust to new pressures.

The *Flagship* global growth storyline within the first Horizon up to 2050 involves an unavoidable "low-growth trap" for the most advanced economies, which is expected to develop as a number of key natural resources become scarce, populations across the globe age, investment rates decline and the prospects for innovation and policy reforms become uncertain. The growth engine governing our world decelerates as the global society becomes increasingly affluent and old. A wide range of enabling, transformative and social technologies will be the main drivers for the socio-ecological transition storyline within the third Horizon. This scenario describes a "resource revolution", in which high-productivity economic growth will be achieved through technological progress, which is connected to business innovation as well as to new management approaches for capturing opportunities at all levels (Flagship 2nd Workshop Background Paper: 17-24). The interaction of the scenarios is built by the second Horizon, which facilitates the process of looking beyond growth and shifting to a new paradigm. New ways of measuring progress beyond GDP are already being developed, as the focus increasingly moves to individual and social wellbeing, and to ecosystem resilience.

As a final step in this scenario-building exercise, it is necessary to consider the role of *Europe 2020,* the EU's growth strategy for the coming decade. In a changing world, the aim of the EU is to achieve a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. These three mutually reinforcing priorities should help the EU and the Member States attain high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. Specifically, the Union has set five ambitious objectives on employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate/energy to be met by 2020. Each Member State has adopted its own national targets in each of these areas. Concrete actions at the EU and national levels underpin the strategy. The *EU 2020*

perspectives are of crucial importance in forward-looking activities; they will be directly addressed in the construction of the *Flagship* scenarios, and, consequently, in *FamiliesAndSocieties*.

1.2 Scope of the foresight activities

Some of the key contributions to the foresight activities are expected to come from the findings generated within the project itself. Through the use of this process, the results will be integral to the project, and will thus complement other available reports on the future of the family. The main themes built into the structure of the project's work packages are as follows: the dynamic evolution of family constellations, including non-standard families and family size; gender roles in the family and work-family reconciliation; childcare arrangements, children's welfare and education; intergenerational relations and the family; families and migration; and family policies. At the time of the writing of this deliverable, the details of these themes are being worked out by stakeholders.

Several existing reports on the future of European families will be of use in this context. Two of these reports, one from the OECD[2] and the other from *FamilyPlatform*[3], were discussed in the State-of-the-Art report[4] in this project. Here they are only briefly addressed in order to provide background information on some of the sources of our ideas.

The OECD International Futures Programme (IFP), which started in 2009, developed two contrasting scenarios of the family landscape up to 2030: "Golden Age?" and "Back to Basics". Both scenarios assume that the OECD member countries will have modest economic growth rates, and that pressure on the welfare states will continue due to demographic change. In terms of family issues, the "Golden Age" scenario anticipates the emergence of diverse family forms. High-quality childcare is provided, and family-friendly policies encourage greater personal choices and economic independence. By contrast, the "Back to Basics"

---

[2] OECD (2012). The Future of the Families to 2030, OECD Publishing, http://europa.eu/espas/orbis/sites/default/files/generated/document/en/future-of-families.pdf, download 10.06.2014.

[3] FAMILYPLATFORM (2011). Wellbeing of Families in Future Europe - Challenges for Research and Policy, FAMILYPLATFORM - Families in Europe Volume 1, edited by Uwe Uhlendorff, Marina Rupp & Matthias Euteneuer. See also: FAMILYPLATFORM (2011). Foresight Report: Facets and Preconditions of Wellbeing of Families, Report produced within the framework of the EU's 7th Framework Programme project SSH-2009-3.2.2 "Social platform on research for families and family policies".

[4] di Giulio, P., Fent, T., Philipov, D., Vobecká, J. & Winkler-Dworak, M. (2013). State of the Art: A Family-Related Foresight Approach, VID Working Paper 08/2013, Vienna Institute of Demography, http://www.oeaw.ac.at/vid/download/WP2013_08.pdf. See also FamiliesAndSocieties, D.10.1 State of the Art report: A Family-Related Foresight Approach. Paola di Giulio, Thomas Fent, Dimiter Philipov, Jana Vobecká, Maria Winkler-Dworak, Vienna Institute of Demography, Submission date: 30/07/2013.

scenario involves a return to traditional values. The family is forced to take on more care responsibilities in response to massive cuts in social services.

The *FamilyPlatform* project prepared four different scenarios based on the foresight approach for future families and living arrangements up to 2035. The four different future scenarios were constructed along four key drivers. The major implications derived from the scenarios focus on intergenerational and community solidarity. The perspectives of children and adolescents are taken into account in order to achieve a balance between the rights and interests of various age groups. The wellbeing of families will be also affected by rapidly developing technologies.

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014, the book "Family Futures"[5] was published by Tudor Rose. This landmark publication deals with major aspects of family poverty, work-family balance, social integration and intergenerational solidarity. The book presents a framework for the role of the family in present and future societies from a global perspective, and brings together examples of family programmes in 74 countries.

Another ground-breaking book published last year is "Future Families: Diverse Forms, Rich Possibilities", written by Ross D. Parke[6]. Based on an interdisciplinary approach, Parke provides comprehensive information about the on-going changes in modern family structures. Because it offers a broad foundation of knowledge about the diverse forms of contemporary families, the book will serve as a basic reference in social science.

1.3 The main mission of the futures task force workshop

Given this background, the organizers of the futures task force workshop (in short, the workshop) started with the primary task of seeking to identify the core drivers that might shape European family forms and family wellbeing in the future. A complete list of drivers would be too long and impossible to address during the workshop. Instead, the drivers had to be selected from a range of socio-economic, demographic, cultural, normative and policy-related factors. Thus, it was necessary to first narrow down the long list of family-related issues to a small number of key areas that will be essential in the subsequent forward-looking activities.

---

[5] Online version available: http://digital.tudor-rose.co.uk/family-futures/#5/z
[6] Parke, D. R. (2013). Future Families: Diverse Forms, Rich Possibilities. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.

The main mission of the task force workshop—the organization and results of which are reported here—was to contribute to the discussion on the scope of the family-related matters that will be included in the process of constructing the forward-looking view on the European family. We also expect that the results of the workshop will facilitate the selection of the key drivers of the future of the family in Europe. That is why it is defined as a futures task force workshop. To complete this mission, 36 stakeholders were summoned for a joint open discussion on a preliminary selection of family-related topics. These stakeholders came from different institutions, including both governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGO). A list of participants in the task force workshop is provided in appendix III. The goal of the discussion was to provide a unidirectional flow of information from stakeholders to scientists. While this information is unlikely to be new to academic researchers, it reflects the informed opinions of stakeholders about which points are important to consider among the wide range of issues related to the future of families. Thus, the purpose of the workshop was not to prepare an innovative scientific report, but rather to gather input from the participants that can help organizers better define the subsequent components of the forward-looking activities, including the forthcoming focus groups and the online questionnaire.

In Section 2, we outline the organization and the workshop. In Section 3, we present a summary of the main results. Finally, in Section 3, we discuss the main inferences, and present our conclusions.

The report includes two appendices prepared by two non-governmental organizations which are members of the consortium. They present these NGO's views on the main questions stated at the workshop. The position of ELFAC on the results of the task force workshop is provided as appendix I and the contribution of IFFD to the report as appendix II.

2 Thematic and Practical Organization of the Workshop

Of the wide array of social and economic factors that determine family life, particular attention will be given to issues involving the poverty and hardship in everyday life experienced by families, especially in connection with the recent financial and economic crises; as well as the related issues of rising social inequality, housing availability and job stability. Of the demographic factors that shape families, special attention will be given to issues related to the increasing number of families with elderly members; the increasing diversity of family forms; the increasing instability of family forms; life course changes related to families, such as family formation; and families of migrants. The policy issues that

are to be addressed include the provision of childcare facilities; family tax benefits; migration policy, including family reunification; and incentives for parenting by both parents and grandparents. The socio-cultural issues that are to be tackled include intergenerational relations and extended families; gender roles and labour division in the family; images of parents, including of mothers and fathers; the influence of increasing education; and the effects of stereotypes.

For the purposes of the workshop, we used the term "family wellbeing", a concept which cuts across all of these issues. No definition of family wellbeing was suggested to the participants; each one of them worked with his or her personal understanding of the concept. In order to narrow this long list, the organizers selected four topics that touch upon the general areas outlined above:

- o **Gender relationships**: includes the distribution of household and care tasks, the redistribution of paid work within couples, the negotiation of roles within couples, the impact of gender roles on child development.
- o **Childcare arrangements**: care at home, institutional care, and all other forms of childcare (the role of grandparents); the quality of childcare.
- o **Economic security/insecurity**: the adjustments families are making to economic conditions, such as spatial mobility or migration; the impact of poverty and employment/unemployment; child labour; children's life chances.
- o **Intergenerational linkages in the family**: care for elderly and disabled family members (including disabled children); the proximity of family members; the proximity and the position of children and young adults in the family.

The four topics were the main points of discussion during the entire workshop, which was organized into two parts.

The first part consisted of round-table discussions carried out around four tables, one for each of the four main topics. There were three rounds. Each stakeholder took part in three out of the four topics. Each table had a moderator who made notes of the ideas generated by the stakeholders in response to four questions. The four questions asked for each of the topics loosely followed the structure of a SWOT analysis: i.e., one referred to strengths (S), a second to weaknesses (W), a third to opportunities (O) and a fourth to threats (T). They are listed in the discussion on Part 1 below. While a SWOT analysis was used to facilitate structured discussions during the workshop, the subsequent application of rigorous SWOT-specific analytical tools was not envisaged.

The second part the workshop included discussions on the issues which have the greatest general impact on family life and wellbeing within each of the four topics. These views were mostly generalizations of those expressed during the discussion on each of the four questions, although some other issues were also added. Finally, there was a short general discussion across the four topics in which other related topics were touched upon. The stakeholders were reminded to consider future changes related to all of the issues discussed over the course the workshop.

The workshop lasted about 4.5 hours (including time for breaks and for changing tables).

3 Outcomes of the Workshop

This section presents the outcomes of the discussions at the four tables, as documented by the moderators. With the exception of some minor edits made for purposes of clarity, these summaries represent the views expressed by the stakeholders.

The exposition is structured based on the four main topics. Within each topic the four SWOT questions are stated along with the corresponding views of the stakeholders. After each of the four questions within the topic were discussed, there was a brief final round of discussion on the topic in which general ideas were shared. At the end of the workshop, there was a brief discussion of the general issues addressed.

The text of the outcomes of the workshop includes several dozen ideas organized according to the pre-defined four themes and SWOT questions. This large body of information is presented without revisions from an academic viewpoint, with the exception some corrections of terminology and style. Several statements may appear debatable; while others may seem too general or too specific. Some statements may not refer directly to the question or to the theme. But they were preserved in the list because the main goal of the workshop was to generate ideas for further work on the forward-looking activities in the framework of the *FamiliesAndSocieties* project, and not to reach a complete and consistent summary of the stakeholders' views. The application of SWOT analysis tools—such as those based on pairing opportunities with threats or strengths with weaknesses—was not envisaged. Thus, the results will hardly meet the requirements for carrying out these kinds of analyses. It should also be noted that the questions about the future were frequently heuristically anchored in the present. This form of substitution is often used in psychology, as questions about the future can lead to responses that are both too complex and inexact. Thus, the placement of the

topic of the question in the present is intended to encourage reasonable answers that include the desired information.[7]

The rich body of information gathered during the workshop serves as a database of ideas that can be selected in accordance with our main objectives presented in the introductory section. Specifically, the ideas can be used in the design of the forthcoming focus groups, in the formulation of the online questionnaire, and in the final synthesis of all of the information gathered using these methods.

3.1 Topic 1: Gender relationships

S: Which gender relationship arrangements will improve family wellbeing and how? Arrangements and their effects.

- o Gender equality improves family wellbeing.
- o The way parents share responsibilities and choices determines gender relations within the family.
- o Gender roles in the family can be reproduced by the children in the family.
- o Division of parental leave and of household work.
- o The higher the education of the mother, the greater the wellbeing of the family. However, gender should not be seen as the only structural element or concept. The stakeholders expressed different views: one should first look at education, income, and stability of work, and then consider gender; alternatively, there is no need to prioritize, as these factors are interrelated.
- o Gender stereotypes make life easier since they provide predefined roles of behaviour which releases the family members from negotiating and reflecting on everything. They help to structure family life. Social norms aid decision-making with regard to issues like when to start a family and how many children to have.

W: Can these same relationship arrangements be harmful to the wellbeing of the family? If so, which ones are harmful to which families forms, and what are the effects of these arrangements? What other changes in gender relationships can be harmful to the wellbeing of the family?

- o Some gender stereotypes limit opportunities.
- o Some gender stereotypes limit the chances of children. They restrict children´s education and career choices. Moreover, some stereotypes violate human rights and child rights.
- o Parental roles in same-sex families: these parents deal with the same questions and the same problems. The term "gender roles" should be replaced by "parental roles" in the case of same-sex families.
- o Domestic violence (both against adults and against children) is a serious threat to family wellbeing.

---

[7] Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. Macmillan.

- Traditional role of the father. The role of the father needs to be emphasized more than it has been in the past. Father empowerment needs to be complemented by encouraging women to let go; i.e., women need to let the fathers develop their own style of parenting.
- Shifts in the composition of the family like divorce, and how the family deals with them, have crucial effects on gender relations and family wellbeing. In Sweden after a divorce, about 50% of children live alternately with both parents, which allows them to maintain stable relations with both parents. In Germany, about 90% of children live with their mothers after a divorce.

O: Which economic factors can improve gender relationships and how? Which policies may effectively improve gender relationships and how?

- There is an economic need to expand female labour force participation.
- Gender equality increases union stability.
- Encouraging girls to pursue technical careers could help to eliminate or weaken certain gender stereotypes.
- It is necessary to challenge the stability of certain traditional stereotypes to improve gender equality.
- Leave for fathers could be encouraged by financial incentives.
- Similar pay for similar work independent of gender.
- More support for single-parent families.
- Education policy can contribute to greater gender equality among children.
- Having two separate and one common bank account in a family could improve the economic independence of both parents.
- Employment policies impact gender relations.
- Religion and social norms can influence the evolution of policies, and vice versa.
- The tax system in Germany provides incentives to get married, including for same-sex couples.
- The individual tax system in Sweden provides incentives for both parents to work, and for both parents to take parental leave.

T: Which economic factors can damage gender relationships, and how? What are their effects on family wellbeing?

Which policies damage gender relationships, and how? What are the effects of such policies on family wellbeing? On which families?

- Gender pay gap, or gender differences in income: the point in time when women are disadvantaged in the labour market is not at the beginning of their professional career. In most European countries, there is no formal or legal inequality in the labour market anymore. Nevertheless, pink ghettos persist in the labour market.
- Perceptions of income from work differ from perceptions of income from social security benefits.
- Financial incentives for fathers to take parental leave violate gender equality.
- Habits and regulations concerning bank accounts or surnames can strengthen traditional family stereotypes.

Final round - largest impact on family wellbeing

The background:
- We need to identify the most disadvantaged families.
- Supporting the most vulnerable families is crucial.
- Poverty among (female) single-parent families should be addressed.
- Giving single parents the opportunity to work gets them out of poverty.
- Gender policies that support the most vulnerable are needed.

Priorities with largest impact:
- Challenging stereotypes and some traditionally assigned roles and practices as early as possible in the lives of children, youth and newly formed families.
- Helping both partners achieve economic independence to ensure greater personal autonomy.
- Empowering fathers and expanding their role in the family.
- Increasing the role of NGOs and the media.

3.2 Topic 2: Childcare arrangements

S: What sorts of family re-arrangements would facilitate childcare (in patchwork, one-parent, and two-parent families)? What would be the effects of such arrangements?

o The law should regulate parent-child relations in new family forms.
o Ethnic communities: the fact that nuclear families and the related childcare arrangements are disrupted by the migration of just one member of the family may be alleviated through involvement in ethnic communities; as siblings, cousins or even just people from the same ethnic group could take care of the children when a parent is absent.
o Participation of children in family and services decisions (inclusion of children in decisions about who will have custody of them, as well as about whether baby sitters, family members or other care and education institutions should be involved).
o Common framework for public and private care (educational and family institutions can share the responsibility for kids).
o Flexible and neighbourhood-organized care.

W: What sorts of family re-arrangements would complicate childcare (in patchwork, one-parent, and two-parent families)? What would be the effects of such arrangements?

o Absence of grandparents—continuity can be a problem if they are missing. Grandparents often live far away or are still working, or they risk losing contact with their grandchildren because of union disruptions. Yet these contacts are important for a child's affective life, and they provide a sense of family continuity.
o Half of custody cases may need special arrangements. Children who are in shared custody have special needs for institutional care; for example, since both parents have the right to be informed about the child's progress or problems the information flow and follow-up has to be directed to both of them.
o Solo parents (raising children alone).

- Social care policies should not discriminate based on migration background, gender or family form.
- Parents should not be "forced" into one form of care.
- Lack of participation of civil society in policy-making about care.

O: Which economic incentives/conditions will improve childcare arrangements/infrastructure, and how? Which policy/institutional tools and policies will improve childcare arrangements/infrastructure, and how?

- Family-sensitive and responsive firms: companies can be certified according to their family friendliness. The incentives are indirect: building a reputation as a company that is responsive to the needs of families can help the organization attract potential employees with families or family concerns.
- State policies that do not discriminate based on family arrangements; specifically, policies that do not give priority to certain family forms, such as the traditional family.
- Gender sensitivity to both parents (parental leave policy).
- Parental leave: extending the potential period when leave can be taken.
- Focus on the quality of the childcare, including the training of teachers.
- Flexible childcare (24 hours a day).
- Reduce social inequalities via formal childcare, where relevant.
- Monitor medical status and mistreatment through formal care.
- Sufficient number of carers in institutions and gender-balanced core personnel.
- Anticipate the timing of schooling (putting kids into compulsory education earlier—at ages 4-5 instead of 6-7—would reduce the number of years in which families have to find costly solutions for childcare).
- Multigenerational housing and service exchange.
- A child-minder can take care of a small number of children, while taking care of her own baby. These carers need to be educated to develop this kind of job, regardless of whether it is paid.
- Kindergarten should not just be seen by parents as a childcare solution, but as a means for developing social competence (child development and education).

T: Which economic incentives/conditions will have negative effects on childcare arrangements/infrastructure, and how? Which policy/institutional tools and policies will have negative effects on childcare arrangements/infrastructure, and how?

- Lack of sensitivity to family diversity/number of children.
- Insufficient access to public childcare.
- Lack of nationwide quality standards on child protection, public care (Austrian case) and monitoring.
- Overly specific policy interventions (An example was given from Spain or Catalonia: Apparently there are special subsidies for working parents who would like to place their children in private institutions because there are insufficient places in public. institutions, but cannot afford to do so. It was argued that such measures are too specific and do not solve the problem as a whole).
- Lack of say of children regarding childcare services.
- Underrepresentation of poor families (in institutional childcare) due to fees (even in public institutions). Childcare centres should be free for families unable to pay.

Families should pay proportionally according to their income (i.e., means-tested taxes).

- o Lack of recognition for care-related jobs, both in terms of gender bias (i.e., pink market) and economic bias (i.e., underpayment).

Final round - largest impact on family wellbeing

- The wellbeing and the participation of the child should be stressed.
- Childcare arrangements should be flexible.
- Family policies should be open and should not discriminate based on a family's arrangement, origin or social class.

3.3 Topic 3: Economic un-/certainty

S: What family economic constellations (incl. security/ insecurity) will lead to improved family wellbeing (incl. children's life chances)?

- o Capacity for budgeting: household members need basic financial literacy.
- o Family incomes can be increased by enabling both parents to be engaged in paid work.
- o Access to free, high-quality care services.
- o Universal social security coverage.
- o Digital inclusion: universal access to online services; digital literacy and security.

W: What family economic constellations will lead to a deterioration of family wellbeing (incl. children's life chances)?

- o Unbalanced mobility; jobs are mobile but people and especially families are less mobile.
- o Mobility for employment is dividing families.
- o The single-earner model can leave the partner who stays home in a disadvantaged situation; for example, in case of divorce this partner will have less income and a smaller individual pension.
- o Long-term unemployment affects not just the financial situation of the individual, but also his or her self-esteem and family stability.
- o Privatization of social and health services.

O: Which economic factors will improve the wellbeing of families? Which policies will improve the wellbeing of families?

- o Introduce a universal basic payment for children (in Germany, a payment of 500 euros per month is being debated); should it be subject to taxation and to progressive payment?
- o Regulate housing speculation; make more housing available. Austria has introduced flexible housing that allows people to adjust their house size over their life course.
- o Certification of family-friendly firms; those receiving certification could benefit from tax reductions or special priority points in getting public contracts.
- o Availability of low-interest loans for young people; e.g., education loans, mortgages.
- o Support for expanding the rental market in countries where it is very small.

- o Facilitation of the rental market.
- o Set a minimum income and a minimum wage, and provide supports for children.
- o Reduce taxes on certain items related to childcare.
- o Fiscal policy: family wellbeing is enhanced not just by social, but by economic policies.
- o Distribution of resources within the family.
- o Provide community support and counselling for individuals and families who are in insecure positions, or who have feelings of insecurity, before greater problems develop.

T: Which economic factors will cause the economic conditions of families to deteriorate even further, and how? Which policies will cause the economic conditions of families to deteriorate even further, and how?

- o Poverty traps caused by policy design.
- o Widening inequalities.
- o Contract-based labour market.
- o Regional economic differences.

Final round - largest impact on family wellbeing

- - Family-friendly labour market.
- - Access to quality services.
- - Access to the labour market and employment for women and for those who take care of children.
- - View childcare with educational purposes as an investment in the economy.
- - View enabling women with young children to work as an investment in the economy.

3.4 Topic 4: Intergenerational linkages in the family

S: Which aspects of intergenerational relations may improve family stability/cohesion and family arrangements, and how?

- o Allowing family members to spend time with peers (especially children); respect for children's rights.
- o Diversity in intergenerational relations.
- o Independent choices of couples.
- o Reassert intergenerational contact, promote intergenerational relations in the community; e.g., multigenerational houses in Germany.
- o Family education is a key element in the educational system; introduce life course studies as a school topic.
- o Facilitate work-life-balance.
- o More public discussion and information.
- o Ensure adequate infrastructure for the maintenance of intergenerational family relations.
- o New media literacy, especially for older people. For example: Training adults to use Facebook helped in Italy; 40% of adults have no access to the Internet while children are "born" with computers in their hands.

- Dependence on older generations and dependence of the older generations on their ancestors.
- Poor families do not have access to services.
- Discrimination of people based on age and of some types of families based on legal status.
- Ignorance about elderly families.
- Adults may disregard children's rights.
- Lack of support and care arrangements for the dependent and for people with disabilities (adaptive support).
- Migrant and family re-unification; not respecting the rights of migrant families.
- Unexpected job transitions.
- Having an unstable financial situation.

O: Which economic tools can support positive and functional intergenerational relations, and how? Which policy tools can support positive and functional intergenerational relations, and how?

- Supporting diversity is about respecting family choices and values.
- Promote intergenerational linkages in general; not only within the family, but in the whole community. For example, in the "multigenerational houses" in Germany, elderly people have contact with young people.
- Promoting intergenerational linkages through projects involving the elderly and children (in both directions: elderly to children, and vice versa). For example, family organizations can work with organizations for the elderly.
- Pension system that ensures the economic independence of the elderly.
- Maintaining intergenerational justice in public expenditures: monthly allowance for children. Free or reduced prices for social security.
- Basic income or minimum income standards for people of all ages and at all stages of the life course.
- Old-age friendly environment that maximises the independence of the elderly.
- Tackle youth unemployment.
- Promotion of home care.
- Delegation of parental authority.
- Dignity of the person: policies that take into account the individual person and not just the need for assistance.
- Promote intergenerational housing arrangements in order to avoid the creation of a ghetto of residences for the elderly.
- Access to political power: promote a youth council that gives young people access to power and answers important questions, such as issues related to pensions. It's about promoting equality in the intergenerational dialogue.
- Safeguarding children's rights: create an equal footing.
- Adopt urban planning to facilitate intergenerational relations.

T: Which economic tools can harm positive and functional intergenerational relations, and how? Which policy tools can harm positive and functional intergenerational relations, and how?

- o Age and family-related discrimination in the workplace.
- o No job security for young people (short-term contracts).
- o Expensive housing, no job opportunities, and a lack of adequate parental leave.
- o Focusing only on economic measures of prosperity is detrimental.
- o Adapt the tax system to future needs.
- o Policy flexibility: policies should support diversity rather than being based on general assumptions about standard family arrangements.
- o Principle of subsidiarity; in Italy for example, the government has cut the funding for subsidiarity to families. However, this principle could be upheld through multilevel support (from local and national sources).

Final round - largest impact on family wellbeing

- Non-discrimination.
- Economic independence.
- Work-life balance: family-friendly workplaces.
- Tax system (linked with housing).
- Stop thinking in terms of assistance.
- Political education about the family: placing family wellbeing higher on the political agenda.
- Roles of stereotypes in the society (see, for example, the role of the media).

3.5 General issues that pertained to all of the tables and themes

- All family forms and family arrangements should be included and treated equally in law and policy; policies should be flexible.
- Gender equality should be implemented in law and in practice, as this would improve family stability, the national economy, and the financial stability of families and individuals.
- Policies should allow carers to have choices; policies should not implicitly incentivize only one or just a few types of family arrangements; policies should encourage the labour market participation of carers and quality childcare that is accessible for all, particularly for those from the lower and immigrant classes.
- Labour insecurity is a major issue, particularly for young people; weaker people lack opportunities and support.
- Financial independence; employment security.

4 Inferences

This section presents the main themes that emerged from the long list of ideas presented in the previous section. They are presented in several groups of issues. These inferences are not a summary of the issues raised by the stakeholders; rather, they represent a synthesis of the core themes that permeated most of the discussion. The main criterion for their selection was how important they were considered to be for the project. While some of the stakeholders' ideas

appear not be adequately addressed here, they will be considered in more depth later on in the course of the project.

The following paradigms were found to be particularly important.

4.1 Vulnerable families

The discussion included numerous references to diverse disadvantaged families. These are families who face difficulties in everyday life, and who are hindered from fully participating in society. These disadvantaged families are diverse: they may face problems related to poverty, migration, ethnicity (such as that of the Roma), culture, or sexual orientation (such as same-sex couples). Families living in poverty are disadvantaged because their lack of financial resources may deprive them of fundamental human rights, such as the ability to maintain normal housing conditions or their children's participation in education. Families of migrants can be disadvantaged, especially those who come from a different cultural environment, because they may be socially excluded or have insufficient social contacts. In addition, migrant workers are more susceptible than local workers to losing their job when a firm is downsizing. Members of disadvantaged families have reduced chances of finding a job. Same-sex couples are subject to stigmas, and are thus disadvantaged.

The term "vulnerable families" is sometimes understood as having the same meaning as "disadvantaged families". Alternatively, the term may refer to families who are at an increased risk of becoming disadvantaged. For example, a family in which the adults are unemployed is vulnerable because long-term unemployment can put the family at risk of poverty.

For the purposes of a medium- to long-term forward-looking activity on families in Europe, it is important to consider vulnerability, because the risks it refers to may turn into reality, and the number of disadvantaged families may increase in the future. Thus, vulnerability is potential disadvantage. To avoid terminological confusion, we prefer to use the term "vulnerable" to describe the situations in families who are either potentially or currently disadvantaged.

A crucial problem that vulnerable families face is the reproduction of vulnerability within families. What is meant by this?

Children living in poor families may be deprived of an adequate education because the parents are unable to provide them with the necessary resources. Because of their family's low income, the children may need to start working earlier in life. Thus, they become

accustomed to poverty; when they reach the age of young adulthood, they might maintain a style of living that corresponds to a culture of poverty; i.e., their aspirations in life will be influenced by poverty rather than by more conventional modes of living. Families of immigrants who are socially excluded may continue to live in closed social groups. They are likely to experience problems integrating into the general population. The reasons for social exclusion might include adherence to traditional customs from the place of origin which are not in alignment with those of the culture of the general population. For example, migrant families may follow the male breadwinner model, and the women in the family may not go to school or to work. The gender roles associated with these models may be reproduced in the children of these families.

In short, poverty reproduces poverty, and social exclusion reproduces social exclusion. This reproduction continues across generations: younger generations who grow up under the restrictions imposed by vulnerability eventually replace their parents' generation. Without external support, these families may be unable to overcome their disadvantages, which may include poverty, social exclusion and relative deprivation.

In the decades to come, this cycle will undermine policies that aim to reduce poverty and fight social exclusion. Therefore, in a forward-looking activity it is important to consider how this cycle can be broken. It may be possible to do so in the medium to long run; most likely with the change of generations, as the next generation may prefer a set of norms and family relationships that differ from those they grew up with.

The main purpose of including this topic in the forward-looking activities in the project is to focus attention on the range of policy issues that can contribute to breaking the cycle of the reproduction of poverty and social exclusion in the family.

The types of vulnerable families listed below will be considered in the project. The list is not exhaustive; other forms are likely to be added.

- *Families living in poverty*: In general, non-traditional families, like cohabiting and non-cohabiting couples and single parents, experience higher rates of poverty. Across the European Union, about one-quarter of the population are at risk of poverty or social exclusion[8]. In most of the EU member states, children are much more likely to be exposed to the risk of poverty than elderly people. Recent EU figures reported that 27% of children are at risk of poverty or social exclusion[9]. This indicator is measured by the share of persons with an equivalized disposable income below 60% of the national equivalized median income. Confronting child poverty is a central goal of

---

[8] These figures are published by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, and are based on data from the EU-SILC survey.

[9] Eurostat, Statistics in focus, 4/2013.

general family policies aimed at breaking the cycle of intergenerational transfers of social inequalities. When poverty limits opportunities related to educational performance and health outcomes, special policies are needed for marginalized families. Poverty affects the whole family environment, and must be treated as a family issue.

- *Socially excluded families*: This category includes the families of migrants and certain ethnic and culturally defined groups. Even if they are not poor, families who differ culturally from the local population are not fully accepted, and they can even be segregated in ways that make it difficult for them to find a job or access housing.

- *Same-sex couples*: As many societies do not accept same-sex relationships, these couples may feel socially excluded. Social norms are expected to change towards increasing tolerance. Despite recent legal changes, married same-sex couples still face social stigma. Gay and lesbian couples also have to deal with family rejection and may have less support from their own relatives, neighbours and friends. Legal marriage seems to be of symbolic importance to same-sex couples; maybe even more so than for heterosexual couples, among whom cohabitation and non-marital childbearing is widely accepted. Thus, marrying can help these couples gain recognition and strengthen the resilience of their families.

- *Single-parent families*: In most cases this is the mother, and she faces the double burden of having to earn income for the family and care for her children. Poverty is more common among these families. For women, there is a twofold effect of material hardship. First, the gender pay gap suggests that women tend to earn less than men. As a single mother may have an even lower earning capacity than other women, her assets may be limited, which could negatively affect her family's living arrangements. The responsibility for raising children alone creates significant barriers to higher-wage employment. Meanwhile, noncustodial fathers often make lower contributions in both money and time to the wellbeing of their children than they would if they lived with their children.

- *Large families* constitute a specific case (see appendix I).

- *Families with disabled members and specifically disabled children* also constitute a vulnerable group; see deliverable D6.7 for more details on disabled children.

4.2 Family wellbeing from a child's perspective (the position of the child in the family)

"There is rich diversity in family situations today, not only concerning family arrangements, but also in terms of the parent-child relationship; education and child-rearing models; the most serious issue of child protection from domestic violence, abuse and exploitation; the link to alternative care arrangements; diversity in cultural backgrounds; etc.: and children and their

rights have their place in discussions on all of these situations". This text was a written comment by a workshop participant (acknowledgement: Helmut Sax).

Child-related issues and the position of the child in the family were probably the topics that were most frequently mentioned during the workshop. They can be summarized as follows:

- *Parent-child relationship*: It is a right of the child to live with both parents. Traditional gender stereotypes frequently favour the mother more than the father. Thus, the father's participation in the child's life may be hindered. This is most evident after divorce, when custody arrangements are made. As mentioned above, in Germany, 90% of the children of separated parents live only with their mothers (based on traditional gender stereotypes); while in Sweden, only 50% of these children live only with their mothers (based on a modern understanding of gender relations). Parent-child relationships will become more diverse as new family constellations become more common. This diversification requires careful analysis, and should be accommodated through flexible policy arrangements.

- *Child protection*: Issues related to domestic violence against children, child abuse and bullying, and child exploitation are addressed in high-level international legal documents, such as the Convention on the Rights of Children. Although these forms of violence are legally regulated in European countries, they nonetheless persist and can lead to appalling physical and moral injustices, and deep economic and social inequalities. The *Eurochild Annual Conference* provides a forum for the discussion of these problems at the level of European countries. The importance of these issues to the future development of families in Europe is beyond dispute.

- *Childcare*: While this component of childrearing is well recognized in contemporary family policies, much more action is needed. The stakeholders stressed a number of issues related to the diversity of care arrangements, flexible scheduling (24-hour-a-day availability), neighbourhood-organized care, and child-minders. Parents are concerned about the quality of care and of carers, as well as about the availability of care.

- *Education*: This is another component of childrearing that is thoroughly recognized in family policies. But as in the case of childcare, education needs have yet to be fully met. Among the topics raised were the quality of education, including of teachers; access to contemporary methods of education, including information technology; and access to schools for children living in remote regions. Education is seen as a means of achieving higher levels of gender equality. It plays a crucial role in child development, and especially in teaching children about contemporary values such as personal autonomy and tolerance.

- *Negative gender stereotypes*: These stereotypes may lead to significant violations of children's human rights, such as the right to an education. In some traditional cultures, parents do not allow to their female children to go to school. Especially in poor families, parents may treat their children as cheap sources of labour, and may therefore

interfere with their school attendance. Traditional parents may demand respect and obedience from their children, and discourage them from developing their own personality.

-   *Child participation*: Children should be heard. Children have their own opinions and preferences, which should be respected by parents; children can even participate in decision-making.

These and similar other issues raised indicate that the stakeholders are especially concerned about the human rights of children (for example, "Adults' disregard of children's human rights"), the participation of children and child development.

4.3 Legal and policy inclusion and the equality of all family forms and family arrangements – flexibility of policies

The title of this topic was taken directly from the list of the stakeholders' ideas, specifically, from the list of "General issues that pertained to all tables and themes". Another text from the list of ideas, taken from the list of "threats" on the fourth theme, states: "Policy flexibility: policy should support diversity rather than making policies on the basis of general assumptions about standard family arrangements". This statement suggests that policies will be less effective if they focus mainly on a typical family form, and thus disregard the broader spectrum of new family arrangements.

It is expected that new living arrangements such as cohabitation, single parents and same-sex couples will become more frequent in the future than they are today. Therefore, these families will need more policy support, and appropriate policy adjustments will become increasingly necessary.

It is also anticipated that some traditional family-related practices and stereotypes will give way to modern family relationships built on increased gender equality and mutual respect. Will this transition require specific policy arrangements?

The position of the father in the family requires special attention. The share of men who take paternity leave is increasing. After separation or divorce, fathers are becoming more active, and many fathers remain positively involved in rearing their children, in addition to providing financial support. However, many fathers suffer as a result of being separated from their children. Fathers may find it difficult to get part-time work, especially if they have higher-level positions in companies and institutions.

4.4 Mainstreaming family, mainstreaming gender

This topic is well known; its importance was underlined by the European Parliament (Report on reconciling professional, family and private lives 2003/2129(INI) from 24 February 2003). Family mainstreaming encompasses the main activities and features of a family, which include caring and support, as well as affiliation with and affection for family members.

For centuries, great thinkers (such as Hegel) have regarded the family as a union of individuals in which personal freedom is restricted for the benefit of the union. In contemporary times, however, individual personal autonomy is a value that has become widespread among Europeans, and in families it is associated with the transition from a traditional single-breadwinner family model to a more egalitarian division of labour in the family and at work.

The stakeholders frequently discussed issues of personal autonomy and family relations. They proposed some ideas that may appear narrow, such as the suggestion that couples have two separate and one joint bank account. It is characteristic of *gender mainstreaming* that such a minor detail can be crucial in securing the personal autonomy of each family member. Hence, family mainstreaming has to be considered together with gender mainstreaming.

4.5 Reconciliation of professional, family and private lives

This topic is not new; moreover it is a central issue that is raised when families are considered in contemporary discussions. Work-life reconciliation permeates the vast majority of the notes from the workshop found in the previous section. It is closely connected to the other topics discussed above, and specifically to gender and family mainstreaming. We will return to this topic repeatedly over the course of work on our forward-looking activities.

4.6 New gender roles

This is another well-known topic related to the family. Specifically, we emphasize the importance of elevating the role of the father in the family ("father empowerment") in light of the transition many families are making from a traditional breadwinner model to one in which both partners work. For example, as one of the stakeholders said, "Fathers have to find their own way of caring for kids, and of course mothers have to let go"; i.e., fathers must be permitted by mothers to develop their own approach to parenting. On the other hand in many societies mothers have to fight that fathers/men do something especially if the child is young.

The situation of families with small children in which the parents are separated requires specific attention. Traditionally, kids stay with the mother, thus depriving fathers of their parental rights, but also depriving children of the ability to maintain close contact with their father. The "50-50" situation in Sweden, and the contrasting one in Germany, are indicative of these problems. This is a human rights issue, and the path to adopting Swedish concepts of parenthood after separation may be long in many countries. However, when more fathers become single parents, fathers have to develop more childcare skills, and they may experience work-family conflicts. This trend is on the rise, and should be included in discussions about the future development of the family.

5 Conclusions and the road ahead

Structurally, the workshop was organized around four main themes which were suggested by the organizers, and which were turned into questions. The participants in the workshop provided a long list of responses to these questions, which are presented under the four themes in Section 3 of this report. These responses are expected to serve as a source of information on their own, and as input that can be useful for subsequent forward-looking activities with the project *FamiliesAndSocieties*.

A specific feature of the results of the workshop was that some of the responses to the questions posed were oriented towards the present situation of the family, while the questions were formulated to include the future. This is an indicator that formulating expert-based answers to questions related to the future is a sophisticated task. This observation reinforces the need for forward-looking activities that can be helpful for stakeholders interested in the future of the European family.

The responses of the stakeholders became the basis for generating ideas. In Section 4, we presented several ideas that may prove useful in the subsequent stages of the forward-looking activities in the project. As these ideas are connected to each other, they can be considered as an integrated unit in subsequent work. For example, in the discussion on vulnerable families in Section 4.1, we focused our attention on the reproduction of vulnerability through the upbringing and socialization of children in a disadvantaged context. In Section 4.2, we considered the position of the child in the family, and issues such as the rights of children and child development. It appears that the issue of the reproduction of vulnerability can also be considered from the point of view of the child's development. The

latter is considered both within the family, as well as from the perspective of seeking to help children break away from the negative cycle of reproducing their family's vulnerability.

The list of generated ideas presented in Section 4 is not exhaustive. It can be enriched after the application of additional methods envisaged in the project, such as the forthcoming focus groups. It may be expected that some new topics be stressed, or that the issues already raised will be addressed more thoroughly.

An important cross-cutting issue discussed in Section 4.3 is policy flexibility. It is especially important to the extent that our forward-looking activities are policy-oriented. Instead of relying on piecemeal policy formulations to address various family constellations and issues, a systematic approach is needed that makes it possible to formulate policies that can be broadly applied. Policy formulation is not within the scope of the project. Instead, our aim is to point out the major commonalities and systematic links between different future family arrangements, as this information can help to inform policy action.

Finally, we again express our gratitude to all of the stakeholders who attended the workshop for their valuable contributions. Any misinterpretations of their statements and analyses is our responsibility.

ELFAC position on the results of the futures task force in the framework of WP 10:
FORESIGHT ACTIVITIES

1. Gender relationship

ELFAC is an acronym of European Large-Families Confederation with members from the majority of European countries. It associates a range of country-level federations and associations. The main objectives of the confederation, founded in 2004, are to represent the interests and provide support to families with children and large families. Members' families include diverse family arrangements: traditional families where parents have traditional roles; modern families where both parents perform professional and family duties in similar terms; and single-parent families.

Regarding family arrangements, our Spanish member, Spanish federated association (Federación Española de Familias Numerosas), carried out a survey in 2012, with about 7000 responses of our large family members from all over Spain. The survey showed that:

1) 91,3% of the interviewed said they were married; 1,2% were single; 3%, widows; 1,2%, living together; 3,2% were separated or divorced.

2) 4,2% of all fathers chose not to work (8% in Spain), 11,2% were unemployed (16% in Spain); 22% of all mothers chose not to work (24% in Spain), 17% were unemployed (15% in Spain).

ELFAC's main aim is to promote ways of helping large families obtain better conditions for them before governments and before companies. We in fact do not foster any particular type of family arrangements, nor gender roles, let alone gender stereotypes. We do reckon the negative impacts of divorce and of domestic violence on children and on their care.

We copy below a chart of our survey with the results of time distribution between genders in domestic tasks. We do not mean these data are "good" or "bad", they are just the answers of associated members in Spain. The following table shows the results of the chart:

Family tasks	Father	Mother	Both parents
Household tasks	3,3	50,1	43,1
Take the children to the medical doctor	5,4	55,4	38,2
Go to the school meetings for parents	5,6	45,6	48,2
Do the shopping	11,3	46,1	41,9
Keep the records of the household economy	15,8	34,3	49,6
Domestic bricolage	61,3	13,8	2,3
Keep up with the household vehicle	67,5	10,1	21,8

We have the following comments or additions on the results of the Task force workshop:

- Anecdotal evidences in Spain show us that women with a job who become mothers have the risk to lose their job when the employer demands an excessive commitment to the firm with long working-days.

- In Spain women do not change their last names when they marry, nor do they have any specific restriction in bank accounts.

- We believe the "Final round - largest impact on family wellbeing" in this section should include a reference to large families as having a higher probability of vulnerability than the rest of families. And because of this, they should receive special protection by the state.

- In Spain, the law in fact considers single parent families with two children as large families (usually, with three children or more).

- Suggest themes for further policy-oriented research that will underpin the policy recommendations that indirectly aroused from the issues discussed during the stakeholder meeting.

- In the mentioned survey 93,5% of our associated member underlined the lack of measures to conciliate job and family duties. They were more concerned with the increase of prices of products needed for their household (97,4%), unemployment (97,4%), youth unemployment (96,7%) and lack of support by the governments (95,1%). Regarding the improvement of measures our members would request from governments, conciliation family-job was precisely the one most supported (98%).

2. Childcare arrangements

- Neighbour large families help each other to organize informal care of their children. Besides, the older children in large families often help out at home taking care of the younger siblings.

- Unfortunately in some European countries kindergarten fees do not decrease proportionally to the number of children of families. Therefore, large families experience a penalty, if they wished to bring their children to childcare centres.

- We support equalitarian parental leaves: if two parents are in the labour market, we believe they both should enjoy the opportunity of taking parental leaves.

- We also support that families be free to decide whether to take their children to a childcare centre or to have them at home.

3. Economic security/insecurity

- We think that lack of economic help to compensate for the expenses of childcare (whether at a centre or at home) discourages parents to have more children.

- All the funds, tax exemptions, services' fees deductions, etc. that are provided to families should be weighted not only according to the parents' income but also to the number of children of the family.

- Large families have difficulties to get decent housing; they often live in overcrowded housing. That disadvantage affects the well being and the good coexistence of children. Governments should especially target large families to help them obtain decent housing.

- Trade unions agreements with companies should follow a mandatory rule by the European Union so that parent workers can conciliate work and family.

- In most European countries large families are closer to vulnerability and social exclusion. In Europe there should be then special family policies to protect them.

4. Intergenerational linkages in the family

- Grandparents should act as such. Instead, sometimes they have been entrusted by parents with too many responsibilities so they end up acting as some sort of "step parents".

- There could be grandparents' education for child care, just as there exist schools or courses for parents.

- Housing design should be designed as modular. It could then adapt to the needs of families regarding their size: childless couples, families with a large or very large number of children, grandparents living with childless couples, etc. Families may grow and shrink back and forth. Housing should adapt to these needs.

General issues that pertained all the tables and themes

As a conclusion, we support these principles, regarding families:

1. The right for families to the freedom of having children. There should not be any restriction or discrimination for families against having the number of children they wish.

2. Large families should enjoy the same opportunities in life as other families and citizens do.

3. There should be an appreciation of families with more children on their contribution to the society.

4. All families with children living in the European Union should enjoy similar family entitlements and the same favourable family policies.

5. Prevention policies regarding families should be paramount, such as: strengthening family functions; fostering family cohesion and family stability; providing information, education, training and guidance to parents.

Contribution of Civil Society to the Report on the futures task force workshop

Eloïse Leboutte

Abstract:

The International Federation for Family Development (IFFD) took part in the workshop dealing with the influence of family forms, cohabitation, and particularly family breakups on the development of children and the role public childcare as well as joint custody can play. In this report, IFFD is contributing to the deliverable by providing its views on the four topics that were addressed during the workshop: gender relationship, childcare arrangements, economic security/insecurity and intergenerational linkages in the family.

Keywords: gender relationship, childcare arrangements, economic security/insecurity, and intergenerational linkages in the family

Introduction

In this report, the International Federation for Family Development (IFFD) contributes to the deliverable on the futures task-force workshop by providing insights on different topics that closely affect families in Europe.

To begin with gender relationships, one has to acknowledge that freedom of choice provides the cornerstone and the basis for further discussions on the topic as it allows parent to decide about the way they wish to organize their family life. We discuss this fundamental principle in the first part of the report, building on the research of Rebuzzini[1] while emphasizing the importance of family policies to support this freedom.

---

[1] Rebuzzini L. is a freelance researcher, with previous collaborations with CISF – Centro Internazionale Studi Famiglia (www.cisf.it) and Forum delle Associazioni Familiari (www.forumfamiglie.org, partner in the

The second part focuses on childcare arrangements with references to presentation made during the Expert Group Meeting[2] that was held in Brussels, in June 2012. It also provides example of good practice in the field of community-based care service, a case we selected from the European Platform for Investing in Children[3].

In terms of economic security/insecurity, IFFD highlights in the third part the necessity for Member States to recognize the right of families to sufficient resources and social assistance and the right to live in a manner compatible with human dignity, recalling this is a common vital issue for single parent, large and immigrant families. We illustrate our point of view with specific recommendations and the presentation of policies as they represent good tools in terms of reduction of family poverty.

The final section analyses the challenges faced by Europe in terms of ageing population while emphasizing the necessity to foster family relationships through education to boost the dialogues between generations. It provides information about a good practice developed by IFFD that aims at providing parents with the necessary tools to educate their children, the future generation.

1 Gender relationship

IFFD would recommend to ensuring freedom of choice in order to strengthen equality between women and men. It refers to what Rebuzzini L. designates as freedom for parents to decide about their working paths, about how long the maternity/paternity leave should be, about the real possibility to be stay-at-home parents. Family policy should therefore build a set of policies and opportunities, which enable families to make different choices, according to their attitudes and values. This freedom of choice should of course be balanced with equal opportunities in terms of policies for women's participation in the labour market, especially for those women with low-levels of education, more exposed to job loss after becoming mothers[4].

---

[2] The European Expert Group Meeting was convened as part of the preparations for the Twentieth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (2014) in cooperation with the Focal Point on the Family (United Nations DESA). More information available at: http://www.family2014.org/ramf.php

[3] The European Platform for Investing in Children (EPIC) wants to provide information about all policies that can help strengthen the capacities of children and their families to face the unprecedented challenges that exist in the current economic climate in Europe. More information and good practices available at: http://europa.eu/epic/practices-that-work/index_en.htm

[4] Rebuzzini L., "Integration of family policies responses and shared responsibilities", in European Expert Group Meeting, Confronting family poverty and social exclusion; ensuring work-family balance; advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity in Europe (Brussels, 6-8 June 2012), p.92

Also, work and family life has to be considered as two fundamental spheres of self-fulfilment and personal wellbeing. Pursuing female employment does not lead to better birth rates, if female employment is not supported by family policies. We furthermore argue that it is the responsibility of childbearing that enterprises and institutions should recognize and support, considering and supporting parenthood. Work-life balance should become an issue of family policies, helping families to find the right balance in their professional and private life[5].

To conclude, many researchers show the inter-connection between economic crisis and declining birth rates, especially in those countries that have been characterized by long trends of low-fertility rates: Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal. In Europe the debate is, in those days, how to promote a sustainable growth: a policy for growth cannot be set aside from investing in families. In times of crisis, the welfare systems of many countries are undergoing different forms of restructuring; the recommendation is therefore that the family policy would not be considered as a cost to cut, but as in investment in growth[6].

2 Childcare arrangements

IFFD considers that one way of helping families take on work, and to be secure in that work is childcare. As such, work should pay for both parents, it should be secure and sustainable; and so government policy should help reduce childcare cost where necessary. Policy should ensure good-quality childcare to assure parents that their children are being looked after properly and enhance child development. Public childcare service supports should be conditional on quality standards. And, as Richardson, IFFD acknowledges that most OECD countries need to further develop their out-of-school-hours care supports[7].

Also, one has to note that maximising child support coverage helps to reduce child poverty in sole-parent families. Public child support or maintenance programmes are important tools in reducing child poverty. From child perspective, advance payments systems are best because they maximise coverage and ensure regular support for the parent with childcare responsibilities, although they do promote disincentives for non-resident parent payments, and impose larger budgetary costs[8].

---

[5] Idem, p.91

[6] Ibidem

[7] European Expert Group Meeting, "Confronting family poverty and social exclusion; ensuring work-family balance; advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity in Europe (Brussels, 6-8 June 2012), p.35.

[8] Forster, M., and Richardson, D. (2011), Reduction de la pauvreté des enfants: comparaisons internationales. Forthcoming. Politiques sociales et familiales, CNAF.

Another way of approaching the question of childcare is to consider it through the scope of community-based care services. As an example, IFFD highlights the experience of the Community Mothers Programme[9] in Ireland. It was first started in 1988 in Dublin by the Health Service Executive, a public organization responsible for the provision of healthcare and personal social services for everyone living in Ireland. The programme targets first-time parents living in disadvantaged areas and is aimed at providing support and encouragement to first-time parents through home visits from community mothers.

It focuses on promoting parent capacity and parent empowerment, specifically by developing parenting skills and enhancing parents' self-esteem. Some of the methods used include the promotion of parents' potential through a behavioural approach in which parents are encouraged to stimulate, breast-feed, and praise their children, as well as ensure their safety.

The Community Mothers Programme also uses illustrated sequences to trigger discussions on healthy and developmentally appropriate means of coping with various child-rearing challenges.

Community mothers are volunteers who were first identified by local public health nurses. They are then interviewed by a regional family development nurse to assess their suitability. After being identified as suitable candidates, community mothers undergo four weeks of training before starting to work under the guidance of a family development nurse. This training focuses on health care, nutritional improvement and overall child development. The work of community mothers consists in monitoring between five and fifteen families during monthly home visits during the first year of the child's life.

More generally and as a conclusion, IFFD considers that childcare program can play an important part in a young child's life. Thus, the childcare program must provide a space for all areas of child development and create a space that has meaning for children and their families. The physical environment of these spaces plays a critical role in creating a childcare program that meets all children's needs. Designing a childcare space requires knowledge and sensitivity to how the physical environment affects child development[10].

---

[9] More information available at:
http://europa.eu/epic/practices-that-work/evidence-based-practices/practices/communitymothers_en.htm

[10] Lorraine E. Maxwell and Gary W. Evans, "Community-base childcare setting, Inform Design, available at:
http://www.informedesign.org/_news/jan_v06r-p.pdf.

3 Economic security/insecurity

As a contribution to the discussions of the roundtable on economic security/insecurity, IFFD highlights the necessity for Member States to recognize the right of families to sufficient resources and social assistance and the right to live in a manner compatible with human dignity, recalling this is a common vital issue for single-parent, large and immigrant families.

It is also about developing, promoting and implementing policies aimed at ending child poverty through the eradication of family poverty and about encouraging social, economic and educational policies to prevent intergenerational transmission of poverty. Moreover, IFFD promotes the provision of integrated services for families and family-friendly taxations policies and practices, including reduced taxes on goods and services for early childhood products and services[11].

Also, as stated by Richardson, family policy in developed countries is relatively slow moving with amendments at the margin of established policies being more common than overhauls of systems. For this reason, IFFD highlights the following recommendations[12]:

- Investment in family policies should start during the early childhood years and continue throughout childhood: such a strategy potentially has high social rates of return and helps avoiding more costly interventions later in life.

- Countries need to ensure that financial transfers, care supports and flexible working-time arrangements for families with young children fit together into a continuum of support without gaps in income or care replacements.

- Public spending on family benefits and in-kind services should be seen as investment for the future. If, for example as part of a fiscal consolidation package, cuts in family support budgets are necessary, it would be best to make temporary or targeted changes to family policies.

- Countries should review options for progressive universalism/cascaded service delivery to improve efficiency without leaving families or children behind. Systems of family service delivery that provide universal services with more intensive delivery to targeted populations (to maximise coverage by ensuring take-up in low income populations for instance) enhance social fairness and social integration of all the children, in the most cost-effective manner.

---

[11] European Expert Group Meeting, "Confronting family poverty and social exclusion; ensuring work-family balance; advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity in Europe" (Brussels, 6-8 June 2012), Recommendations.

[12] Idem, pp. 34-35.

- To ensure employment opportunities are accessible to all families, including those with young children or without partners, and to complement good childcare policies, governments should encourage all employers to offer part-time employment opportunities as well as flexible working hours.

- In the absence of a system of advance maintenance payments, at least some part of the payment by the non-resident parents should directly go to the child. In some countries if the resident parent receives income support, the payment collected effectively goes to the government to offset the cost of this support. This can create disincentives to non-resident parents to pay, and undermine the anti-poverty effect of child support.

- Child support systems should have simple payment formulae and procedures. Greater compliance (and so greater coverage in non-advanced systems) may also be achieved by setting payment rates that account for the income position of non-resident parents.

Finally, IFFD put the emphasis on the following policies as they represent good tools in order to reduce family poverty[13]:

- Cash benefits including: family allowances, designed to support families with costs of raising children, which can vary on the age of their children, family size and the income of the family (universal or mean-tested). In some countries both universal family benefits and working family tax credits (or another work or income conditional benefit) are available. Parental leave benefits to support families to care for the youngest children, such as maternity, paternity and extended home care leave benefits (e.g. child raising allowances) are paid either on the basis of social contributions, or universally for a limited number of weeks or months most often at a percentage of earned income (sometimes to a cap). Parental leave benefits are sometimes conditional on health checks or meeting residency conditions. Birth grants in one-off or multiple payments (such as in France) can also be paid conditionally on the basis of health checks at or around the time of birth. And finally, other cash benefits can be paid – separately from those above – to help meet specific needs of groups such as sole parent families or families with disabled children (child support/maintenance, travel, food, accommodation costs, and household items). These benefits can be paid either periodically or in grant form.

- Family specific tax breaks or allowances are relatively new forms of family intervention for reducing poverty, gaining in popularity since the early 2000's across OECD countries as welfare to work schemes became more popular. They are received by working

---

[13] European Expert Group Meeting, "Confronting family poverty and social exclusion; ensuring work-family balance; advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity in Europe (Brussels, 6-8 June 2012), pp.21-22.

families in the form of reductions in their income tax bill. Sometimes "non-wastable" – that is the difference in cash is paid to working families whose tax bill is lower than amount of the tax break – and on rare occasions paid at different levels depending on the age of the child dependent.

- Services delivered in kind including: childcare and afterschool care services delivered free at the point of consumption or subsidized, with families becoming eligible on the basis of children's ages, family income or parental employment status. Other benefits in-kind can include home help or accommodation services, and services for transport, holidays or child protection purposes. These contribute to subsidizing family costs, combating forms of deprivation and exclusion, and in extreme cases housing or re-housing capacity considerations and time considerations (opening hours) and are often delivered at the local authority/municipality level.

Finally, IFFD wishes to illustrate its point with the example of child support policies as, in contrast to benefits packages, and supports to enable families to earn income, they are benefits designed specifically to support at-risk families. Child support is of particular interest for efforts to sustainably combat poverty due to increasing rates of family breakdown, and sole parenthood, in developed countries. Child support policies can take various forms, though generally they are either advanced public child support payments or publically assisted private payments systems. For instance, the Danish system ensures regular payments are made to the parent with care responsibilities through publically provided advance payments that are later recouped from the non-resident parent obligated to provide financial help. The reason for advancing the benefit is to ensure that all children receive child maintenance without regard to the behaviour or means of the non-resident parent. Resident parents can request the municipal social welfare office to make advance payments for children up to 18 when the non-resident parent misses payment – the public office will then follow the non-resident parent to recoup the costs. Importantly, when the non-resident parent makes payments this is offset against the maintenance payment, and not against income support payments (as in some other countries).

This means applying for this support does not lead to reductions in other benefits, and associated increases in poverty risks. The concerns with the Danish system include: the potential disincentives of the system for non-resident parents to meet their financial obligations, a flat rate which does not account for individual circumstances of children, and/or

resident and non-resident parents (this may work in low poverty countries, this is unlikely to be as effective in high-poverty settings); and the lack of incentives for shared parenting[14].

4. Intergenerational linkages in the family

As stated in the declaration of the civil society[15], IFFD has been advocating and requesting Member States to facilitate intergenerational solidarity as well as to encourage social, economic and educational policies to prevent intergenerational transmission of poverty. In this regard, education may be considered as a tool to facilitate the dissemination of information about the consequences of one's individual choice.

Moreover, as stated during the European Expert Group meeting[16], IFFD acknowledges that the European population is rapidly ageing. A steady increase in life expectancy across Europe during the last century led to increased longevity, while in more recent decades, Europe has experienced falling fertility rates. These two developments impact upon demographic ageing, a process that has become established in the EU in the last 30 or 40 years and which is expected to become further entrenched during the next half century, as the absolute number and the relative importance of the population of older persons continues to grow. These demographic changes will lead to significant challenges for families and individuals. For instance, it could become commonplace for people to move into retirement while still having one or both of their parents alive.

They are many challenges arising from population ageing, such as pressure on public budgets and fiscal systems; strains on pension and social security systems; adjusting the economy and in particular workplaces to an ageing labour force; possible labour market shortages as the number of working age persons decreases; the likely need for increased numbers of trained healthcare professionals; higher demand for healthcare services and long-term care; potential conflict between generations over the distribution of resources.

In this regard, positive parenting has been recognized as a cornerstone of children education worldwide and as a way to potentially reduce public costs related to poor social

---

[14] European Expert Group Meeting, "Confronting family poverty and social exclusion; ensuring work-family balance; advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity in Europe (Brussels, 6-8 June 2012), p.33.

[15] The declaration of civil society on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family has been proposed and disseminated by the International Federation for Family Development. More information available at: http://www.family2014.org/declaration.php

[16] 16 A Raise Awareness Meeting was held on the 5th of June 2012, with the participation of speakers from the European Parliament, the European Commission and the OECD, among others. Then, a European Expert Group Meeting took place during the following three days, in which 26 experts and observers from 15 countries discussed family-oriented policies and strategies aiming mainly at the topics suggested for the 20th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family and learned about different good practices from different locations in Europe.

integration and intergenerational relations. The case method used by IFFD helps parents improve their childrearing skills through the use of practical examples. The case method was first implemented at Harvard Law School. Nowadays many prestigious business schools adopt the case method. A case is a narrative account of a situation, problem or decision usually derived from actual experience and in which people promote active learning, team-based activities and the ability to deal with real-life problems. This case method has been used beyond business and law, in environments such as communication or engineering.

Investing in good parenting contributes to better outcomes in children. Supporting parenting programmes is an example of paying now and paying less principle since it helps preventing conflicts that would imply higher costs later. IFFD courses, carried out in 65 countries, are designed to suit the different stages of child development. All courses are structured on the participant-based case study method and use cases involving real situations. Cases are first analysed by small teams formed by few couples, and then discussed in larger groups at general sessions moderated by experts in family development. The courses differ depending on children's age.One of the most important changes for children today is rapidly evolving family structures.

Although it is not a new development, its consequences can be seen more clearly now. In the

EU, divorce rates rose by 250 per cent in forty years. Moreover, the number of cohabitating couples with children is also increasing in all OECD countries[17].

Concerning the consequences of divorce for children's well-being, for some researchers such as Simons (1996), divorces and separations were seen as healthy for adults and children because when troubled marriages ended, children escaped the burden of being raised in an atmosphere of parental conflict. Since 1980s, however, research on the effects of parental divorce on children's well-being has grown demonstrating that although evidence shows that in the long term negative effect of divorce disappear, there are negative adult outcomes such as lower educational attainment, poor adult psychological well-being as well as intergenerational transmission of divorce. However, the causality of the divorce effect is more difficult and sometimes even impossible to establish. Overall, however, family breakdown has negative impacts not only on children but intergenerational relations within families as well.

In light of existing research indicating that parental conflict is often linked to poor parentchild relationship and negatively impacts children's long-term well-being, new policies

---

[17] European Expert Group Meeting, "Confronting family poverty and social exclusion; ensuring work-family balance; advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity in Europe (Brussels, 6-8 June 2012), p.94.

and programmes should be based on good knowledge about various challenges facing European families. In general, programmes promoting parent's relationships quality tend to improve children's wellbeing and should have a wider use. Policies promoting parent's relationships quality might improve children's wellbeing and intergenerational relationship[18]. For this reason, IFFD would recommend the establishment of Centres for Family Wellbeing that provide parenting and parents' relationship quality programs, high-quality childcare and other services for families.

To conclude, IFFD acknowledges that legal system to support families is beneficial when it includes universal direct financial support, income tax exemptions, social and cultural services (education, healthcare, reduced rate transportation, childcare, nursing of ill and elderly people, etc.), supports and subsidies from local authorities in cash and in kind, as well as compulsory and optional fringe benefits from employers (extra vacation days, schooling aid, etc).

References of appendix II

European Expert Group Meeting "Confronting family poverty and social exclusion; ensuring work-family balance; advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity in Europe" (Brussels, 6-8 June 2012), 138p.

Forster, M., and D. Richardson (2011), "Reduction de la pauvreté des enfants: comparaisons internationales. Forthcoming. Politiques sociales et familiales", CNAF.

Garriga, A. (2010) "Consequences of parental divorce and family structure on children's outcomes in European societies: Individual, cohort and country explanations" PhD Dissertation University Pompeu Fabra.

The European Platform for Investing in Children, available at: http://europa.eu/epic/index_en.htm

Lorraine E. Maxwell and Gary W. Evans, "Community-base childcare setting, Inform Design, available at: http://www.informedesign.org/_news/jan_v06r-p.pdf

The International Federation for Family Development (2014), "Declaration of the Civil Society on the Occasion of The 20th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family" available at: http://www.family2014.org/declaration.php.

---

[18] Garriga, A. (2010) Consequences of parental divorce and family structure on children's outcomes in European societies: Individual, cohort and country explanations. PhD Dissertation University Pompeu Fabra.

Appendix III

Stakeholders who participated in the workshop on January 8, 2014

Bello, Armando	UNICEF - Spanish Committee
Bernacchi, Erika	CHILDONEUROPE (Istituto degli Innocenti)
Dorożała, Karolina	G10 Foundation
Duffin, James-Stuart	ONEFAMILY
Eich, Yvonne	Foundation for the Rights of Future Generations (SRzG), Abassador
Fagerström, Pia	Ministry of health and social affairs, Sweden
Filippini, Tiziana	Istituzione infant toddler centre and preschool – Municipality of Reggio Emilia
Giarratano, Michele	NELFA (Network of Europan LGBT families associations and ARCIGAY (Italian gay and lesbian associations)
Kapella, Olaf	Austrian Institute for Family Research, Vienna University
Karu, Marre	Praxis centre for policy studies, Estonia
König, Barbara	Zukunftsforum Familie
Lammi-Taskula, Johanna	THL - National Institute for Health and Welfare, Helsinki, Finnland
Le Déroff, Joël	ILGA - Europe
Mängel, Toivo	Chancellory of Estonian Parliament
Moritz, Ingrid	Austrian Chamber of Labour
Naziri, Despina	University of Liège
Panzeri, Paola	COFACE
Reinomägi, Andra	The Office of the Chancellor of Justice (Ombudsman for Children)
Rivera, Reynaldo	Intermedia Social Innovation NGO
Sax, Helmut Ludwig	Bolzmann Institute of Human Rights
Scaravelli, Giulia	National Health institute, Italy
Uhereczky, Agnes	COFACE
Vikat, Andreas	UNECE - Statistical Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
Vseviov, Hanna	Ministry of Social Affairs, Estonia

Participants from partner organizations:

Bernardi, Laura	University of Lausanne
Edel, Andreas	Max Planck Institute of Demographic Research/Population Europe
Fent, Thomas	VID - Vienna Institute of Demography
Leboutte, Eloïse	IFFD - International Federation of Family development
Luherne, Maude	Age Platform Europe
Márki, László	ELFAC
Philipov, Dimiter	VID- Vienna Institute of Demography
Sanchez, Raul	ELFAC
Serra, Pau	ELFAC
Socias, Ignacio	IFFD - International Federation of Family development
Vobecka, Jana	VID - Vienna Institute of Demography
Vono, Daniela	Max Planck Institute of Demographic Research/Population Europe

Participants from the Advisory Board

Hostasch, Eleonora	EK Demography Expert Group