

SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN THE SOCIAL SERVICES SECTOR IN EUROPE

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AIM

- To critically assess the role of social dialogue in the social services sector in Europe

OBJECTIVES

- To highlight some of the results of 25 national case studies of social dialogue in the social services sector in Europe
- To make recommendations to strengthen social dialogue



DEFINITIONS

- Long-term care for older people
- Care and rehabilitation for people with disabilities
- Child care
- Other services to reach disadvantaged or excluded groups only included if have strong social dialogue sector

DEFINITION OF SOCIAL DIALOUGE

- “A dialogue between employers and employees”

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COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

Central/ Eastern Europe:

- Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia

Continental Europe

- Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands,

Nordic region

- Denmark, Finland, Sweden

Southern Europe

- Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal

UK & Ireland

- UK, Scotland, Ireland



RESEARCH IN SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN SOCIAL SERVICES

- Social dialogue in social services in Europe is under-researched
- Difficulties in estimating the contribution of social services to social and economy – how to measure social value added?
- Statistics about workforce often collected by different government departments so fragmented
- Workforce often defined by occupation rather than sector
- Large number of part time jobs in social services – often measured in full-time equivalents
- Details of collective agreements – increasingly fragmented and difficult to access

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MAIN TRENDS

- Form of social services – changing from institutional to community and personalised care
- Increasing focus on ‘enabling people to cope’ as compared to ‘doing things for people’
- Funding of social services – major political issue – different solutions introduced - social insurance, care allowance, health and social care integration
- Increased role of for-profit/not for profit private sector providers
- Social services – an economic growth sector in some countries



LABOUR FORCE PROFILE

- Majority workers – women
- Part-time
- Use of migrant labour
- Low pay
- Low status as caring not valued
- Mainly poorly trained
- Ageing workforce
- Shortages of workers in many countries

REPRESENTATIVITY - EMPLOYERS

Several employers' organisations covering social services

- Luxembourg, Denmark, Germany, Poland, Belgium, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic

Some unified employers' organisations

- Austria, Denmark, France, The Netherlands

No employers' organisations

- Bulgaria, Latvia

Creation of new potential employers' organisations

- Spain

SOCIAL DIALOGUE STRUCTURES

Well-defined social dialogue structures (from mid 20th century)

- The Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Belgium, France, Denmark, Luxembourg
- Finland, Sweden, UK, Italy – (dialogue/ negotiations but term ‘social dialogue’ not used)

Newly established social dialogue structures (post-1990)

- Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia

Recently reformed social dialogue structures

- France, Greece, Ireland, Spain, Portugal

REPRESENTATIVITY - WORKERS

Single trade union

- Germany, Czech Republic, Denmark (collective bargaining alliance), France (groupings)

Several trade unions covering social services

- Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, UK

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ISSUES

- Basic coverage wages and some working conditions
- Well developed collective agreements (CAs) cover employer/ employee relations, contracts, working hours, holidays and other absences, training, and trade union rights
- Some CAs include organisational changes, work changes, redundancies

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING COVERAGE

Highest coverage 50 - 100%

- The Netherlands (100%), Luxembourg (100%), Austria (95%), Finland (84.7%),
- Germany (52%)

20-49% coverage

- Bulgaria 25%

Below 20%

- Czech Republic, Latvia, Poland

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CONCLUSIONS

- Social services sector – labour intensive sector so budget cuts affect workers
- Increasing for profit- not for profit providers – response to personalisation of social services
- Representativity of employers – limited
- Representativity of workers – more extensive, often with more than 1 union
- History of social dialogue establishes systems and procedures
- Even in countries with national social dialogue structures social partners often excluded
- Collective agreement coverage for social services – wide national variations in public sector and for-profit/ not for profit coverage lower
- Increasing trend towards enterprise/ company level collective agreements where coverage is limited
- Influence of austerity on collective bargaining – continues



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RECOMMENDATIONS

- Wide range of common problems facing the social services sector should be addressed through the development of social dialogue at European level
- More research is needed to further understand how to support the development of social dialogue at different levels
- New opportunities to promote reflection within the not-for-profit sector needed to identify employer responsibilities across Europe
- More work is needed to develop systems of employer representativity
- Continue to support the creation of social dialogue pilots at national level to create effective dialogue between employers and employees
- National governments and other stakeholders should commission research to explore how social services delivery could be restructured using new technology and new forms of organization

