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 DIALOGUE

• “A dialogue between employers and employees”
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
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
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
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