

1. FAMILY POLICY: INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 The institutional framework for family policies

iv) Existence of plans for changes in the institutional framework for family policies in 2008 or 2009

Austria
No plans for changes.

Azerbaijan
No plans for changes.

Belgium
<p>La communauté flamande Changes may occur at two levels: 1° the federal Government may still transfer in future years some additional instruments which relate to family policies to the three Communities in Belgium 2° following the Community-level elections of June 2009 (e.g. the Flemish Parliament) the next Flemish Government may negotiate and eventually redistribute competencies differently.</p> <p>La région wallonne Les prochaines élections régionales auront lieu le 7 juin 2009. Le cadre institutionnel pourrait dès lors être amené à changer suite à l'installation du nouveau Gouvernement.</p>

Bosnia and Herzegovina
<p>Creation of the Strategy for Protection of Children without Parental Care is in progress. The Draft Law on Social Protection is prepared. There will be amendments or new family law of RS in 2009.</p>

Council of Europe Family Policy Database

www.coe.int/familypolicy/database



Bulgaria

Work is being done on the development of an effective national mechanism for the implementation of demographic policy and the development of administrative capacity within the framework of the national mechanism.

Croatia

On 9th July 2008, the Act on Maternity and Parental Benefits was adopted, which is to take effect on 1st January 2009. The Act stipulates harmonization of the family benefit system with the corresponding legal acts of the European Union (in the area of social policy, employment, free movement of workers and coordination of the social security system), and also with the National Population Policy.

The aim of this Act is to comprehensively regulate the rights of employed, self-employed and unemployed mothers/parents to maternity benefits and leaves, which were so far stipulated by the Labour Act and the Act on Maternity Leave for Self-Employed and Unemployed Mothers. It was pointed out that so far the approach to the system of family support was social and that it is necessary to encourage parents to enter the labour market. In that sense the Act is an incentive to employers to keep the parents at work after the birth of their child.

In order to protect motherhood, to provide care for the newborn child and raise the child, to harmonize family and professional life, the Act stipulates right of a parent, and of a person with parental status caring for the child, to temporal and financial support, conditions and manner of its realization and financing, and bodies authorized for the implementation of this Act. Temporal supports are leaves, exemption from work and stipulated time for providing care for the child, whereas financial supports include salary compensation, monetary compensation, financial aid and the birth grant, which can be used by mother and father of the child or any other person caring for the child until the child turns eight (exceptionally even longer).

This part of the family and population policy that was so far under the authority of several central state administration bodies, by this new Act is transferred under the authority of the ministry for family, which shall be in charge of monitoring its implementation. In accordance with the Act on Amendments to the Act on Social Welfare from 2006, with the aim of promoting family values and providing aid to families facing contemporary challenges (support to parents, children and persons with disabilities), Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity began establishing Family Centres in all counties. So far 17 centres have opened their doors, and the remaining counties are also in process of opening Family Centres. Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity began drafting a special law on family counselling/Family Centres that shall normatively and institutionally regulate the activity of "family counselling".

Cyprus

Studies are being conducted or have been designed for 2008 on topics that are expected to impact on family policies. Such topics include preventive family services, family violence, demographic changes, foster care, open care services for children and other dependent family members, the role of local authorities in promoting services for the reconciliation of work and family life, etc. It should be noted that, within the framework of measures to strengthen social cohesion, an Advisory Body for Social Policy was established in 2007 by decision of the Council of Ministers for the evaluation of all programmes, allowances and benefits. This Body, which will take decisions on important policy changes to be promoted, is chaired by the Minister of Labour and Social Insurance and is made up of the Ministers of Interior, Finance and Health. It is responsible for advising the Council of Ministers with a view to strengthening cooperation in the area of social policy and developing more effective social policies and measures. The Body is assisted by an Inter-departmental Committee, which is chaired by the Director of Social Welfare Services and consists of one representative from each Ministry.

Council of Europe Family Policy Database

www.coe.int/familypolicy/database



Czech Republic

Before the end of 2008 a new advisory body of the government should come into being which would be the Council for the Family, which should be in charge of family policy issues. The members of this Council should be the Ministers of the relevant state departments under the chairmanship of the prime Minister. The aim of this Council would be to support an effective co-operation between the departments during the drafting of measures directed at the support of the families in the Czech Republic. The creation of such Council reflects the priorities of the current government, which include the family and the children, protection of the children and the transformation of the system of foster care.

Denmark

No plans for changes.

Estonia

Not mentioned/not applicable.

Finland

No plans for changes.

France

The family conference that was convened each year with the Prime Minister in the chair is to be replaced in 2008 by setting up the Higher Council for the Family, also chaired by the Prime Minister and a deputy presiding officer. The DIF will function as its general secretariat.

Germany

Not mentioned/not applicable.



Greece

Yes, the improvement and extension of social benefits offered to the vulnerable groups and more specifically:

- The increase of the monthly allowance for unprotected children.
- The enlargement of economic criteria and of the age limit for the children beneficiaries
- The application of this program for children who are deprived of maternal presence

The above mentioned increase seems to be necessary since the monthly allowance for unprotected children is exceptionally low, and as a result, the program could not fulfil the goal for which it had been established. Please, note that the monthly allowance had not been readjusted since 1-7-1997. Additionally, the new social trends and the needs of the modern society call for the extension of the programme for children who are deprived of the mother presence.

- The increase of the maternity lump sum allowance given to mothers who are not covered by social security during the 6-week period before the childbirth and the 6-week period after the childbirth.

Hungary

No.

Iceland

No plans for Institutional changes, for policy changes.

Ireland

No changes are planned.

Italy

See ahead.

Latvia

It is planned to establish a new subordinated institution under the Ministry for Children and Family Affairs - „Family Support Coordination Centre” in 2009 or 2010. Competencies of Centre will be:

- methodical assistance to professionals working with families and children;
- provision of support measures to children and families through psychologist consultations and mediation services;
- provision of support groups to foster families, guardians and adoptive parents;
- provision of medical, psychological and pedagogical assistance to children with behavioural impairments, their parents and specialists diagnostics and work on innovative solutions of children issues;
- provision of training to guardians, adoptive parents and foster families.

Council of Europe Family Policy Database

www.coe.int/familypolicy/database



Lithuania

In the end of 2008 (October) in Lithuania will be new Parliament elections and a new Government. For now in the Parliament a new Concept on Family Policy is till under the debate, but common agreement is not yet achieved. There are some discussions on a new institutional structure which will be responsible for family policy issues. There are Parliamentary parties which agues for a new Ministry of Family Affairs and on changing of Parliament's Commission of Family and Children Affairs into Committee.

Luxembourg

Modification du cadre institutionnel:

Loi du 16 décembre 2008 relative à l'aide à l'enfance et à la famille

Art. 19. Missions et composition

Il est institué un conseil supérieur de l'aide à l'enfance et à la famille qui a les missions suivantes:

- conseiller le gouvernement et les ministres compétents en particulier dans toute question ayant trait à l'aide à l'enfance et à la famille,

- évaluer les besoins en matière d'aide à l'enfance et à la famille,

- suivre l'évolution de l'ONE et des prestataires œuvrant dans le domaine visé,

- promouvoir des relations d'échange et de coordination entre les prestataires.

Le conseil comprend seize membres qui sont nommés par le gouvernement pour des mandats renouvelables de cinq ans et qui sont désignés d'après les critères suivants:

- un membre représentant le ministre ayant dans ses attributions la famille,

- un membre représentant le ministre ayant dans ses attributions l'éducation nationale,

- un membre représentant le ministre ayant dans ses attributions la justice,

- un membre représentant le ministre ayant dans ses attributions la santé,

- deux membres représentant les instances judiciaires,

- trois membres représentant les prestataires offrant des services d'aide à l'enfance et à la famille,

- trois membres représentant les associations regroupant des familles, des parents ou des jeunes,

- quatre membres désignés en fonction de leur compétence professionnelle dans les domaines psychosocial, socioéducatif, juridique, médical ou de soins.

Le conseil est présidé par le représentant du ministre ayant dans ses attributions la famille. Les travaux de secrétariat sont effectués par des fonctionnaires ou employés du ministère de la Famille. L'indemnité à allouer aux membres du Conseil et aux collaborateurs de son secrétariat est fixée par règlement grand-ducal.

Malta

Following the March 2008, the Employment and Training Corporation – the governments employment agency was shifted from under the Ministry of Education, to the Ministry for Social Policy.

Moldova

Not mentioned/not applicable.

Council of Europe Family Policy Database

www.coe.int/familypolicy/database



Monaco

A ce jour, non.

Montenegro

The new Family Law has been adopted in 2007 and it is in charge of the Ministry of Justice : It is planed to decrease the number of children in institutions by developing alternative ways of protection (family accommodation), development of a day-care centres for children with special needs

Netherlands

To date, there has been no overarching family policy in the Netherlands. The main changes are the establishment of a dedicated Interministerial Programme in 2007 and the publication of a family policy document in autumn 2008.

Norway

Yes, we are considering a) changes in the Children Act concerning equality in parenthood also after divorce/break up, b) new amendments of the Marriage Act will be confirmed in Parliament in June stating equality in marriage for same sex couples (see 4.1), c) we will follow up the Equal Pay Commission as to equal pay per hour for women, very important for female single providers.

Poland

No

Portugal

At present there are no plans for changes in the institutional framework for family policies.

Romania

One of the main challenges in the administrative modernization, in the field of social inclusion, is related with setting up 2 major institutions.

Council of Europe Family Policy Database

www.coe.int/familypolicy/database



COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

The Social Observatory represents a new structure whose establishment is required for the assessment of the poverty and social exclusion in Romania. The main mission of the Social Observatory is to provide information regarding the conditions of poverty and social exclusion existing in Romania. The Observatory thereby becomes a barometer of the social needs, a basis for the development of the strategic planning in the field of social protection and social inclusion.

The Observatory will submit periodical reports regarding the current situation and the evolution of the poverty and social exclusion, will make proposals and recommendations for improving the situation of vulnerable groups. The Observatory will support the Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunities and the Government in the drawing up and the subsequent monitoring of the National Action Plan regarding the Social Inclusion and, at the same time it could contribute to the clarification and detailing of the role and activity of the National Commission for Social Inclusion in what regards the monitoring of the implementation of the National Action Plan.

Following the system evaluation performed by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunities, it was concluded that decision makers do not have sufficient or quality information to enable them to prepare the necessary policies and strategies and, at the same time, to analyse the impact of their policies on the increase of the quality of life. The data and information existing at the ministry level are not sufficient and the exchange of information between institutions is inadequate. The collection of information at local level is difficult, as there are no procedures, nor instruments existing for a systematic collecting of information.

As a consequence, the management of the national social assistance system in Romania is difficult to handle, given the fact that it is characterised by a fragmented approach as far as the institutions involved in the benefit management process, as well as the IT platforms, the IT applications and the IT systems used are concerned.

The key features of the IT managerial system that is being implemented in Romania are:

- Management of social benefits based on the "family file", so that there is an overall perspective over the beneficiaries, the benefits received by a family and the amounts spent per family and per total in the system;
- Payment of the benefits to which a family is entitled once a month;
- An accounting interface that guarantees a strict and fast subsequent monitoring of the financial flows;
- Identification of beneficiaries, in order to prevent double charging and payments.

Parallel with the development of an integrated information system for the administration and payment of all the social cash benefits and family allowances, the creation of a new organisational structure is envisaged, namely the National Agency for Social Benefits.

In the field of social services the target is to effectively implement the national legislation by strengthening the capacity of local administration (at county and local level) such as:

- Reorganising the competences and responsibilities;
- Implementing the strategy of decentralisation;
- Training for the staff involved in delivering social services;
- Increasing the number of professionals at local level;

In the same time, some of the Romanian Government in the field of family policies, and especially in the field of child protection are the following:

- Decreasing the number of children without ID cards;
- Increasing the efficiency in providing socio-medical services for promoting and protecting the health status of the families and children, focused on rural areas and poor families;
- Increasing the local authorities capacity for preventing the early school leaving because of the socio-economic causes;
- Promoting and sustaining the programmes for prevention of different forms of child abuse, neglecting and exploitation, including the children traffic and illegal migration;
- Setting up the consultative community structures in order to sustain the prevention of child separation from their families;
- Creation and diversification of day care services.

Russian Federation

No.

Serbia

During 2008, it has been intensively worked on development of new law about social protection in which special solutions that would reflect on institutional framework of family protection would be incorporated and in accordance with policy embedded in the Strategy for Development of Social Protection that has been adopted by the government of Republic of Serbia. The main element of new policy will be the development of all forms of uninstitutional help and support to family and other sensitive groups of citizens and decentralization in providing and securing help and support, which understands enforcing the capacity and role of local self government.

Next to above mentioned, in 2009 are planned amendments of the Family Act, as well as the Law about Financial Support to Families with Children.

Slovakia

No changes in the institutional framework for family policies are planned for 2008 and 2009.

Within the implementation of tasks of the National Action Plan for Children, a new State Family Policy Concept will be prepared and the institute of a public defender of children's rights will be established that will in a wider context affect the current system used for solving the family issues.

Slovenia

With the Programme for Children and Youth 2006-2016, new objectives were added to the old family policy strategy, such as necessary measures to protect vulnerable family members, continuous implementation of family support programmes and specified measures to create conditions for family life.

Spain

Changes have taken place after the elections of March 2008 by which Family policies have been ascribed to the Ministry of Education, Social Policy and Sport. Before the elections, Family policies were ascribed to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The latter Ministry is now the Ministry of Labour and Immigration.

Sweden

No plans for changes.

Council of Europe Family Policy Database

www.coe.int/familypolicy/database



Switzerland

Plusieurs propositions allant dans le sens de donner davantage de compétences à la Confédération sont débattues actuellement au Parlement. Elles concernent:

- l'introduction d'un nouvel article dans la Constitution fédérale prévoyant une politique étendue en faveur de la famille, notamment au moyen d'allègements fiscaux et de mesures permettant de concilier la vie familiale avec l'exercice d'une activité lucrative et en encourageant la formation et l'intégration, et
- l'introduction d'une disposition complémentaire dans la Constitution fédérale permettant à la Confédération également (en plus des cantons) de légiférer en matière de politique de l'enfance et de la jeunesse.

En outre, 5 initiatives parlementaires, émanant de toutes les tendances politiques et demandant la modification de l'article constitutionnel sur l'instruction publique, font l'objet de débats au Parlement. Ces initiatives veulent donner pour tâches aux cantons et aux communes de favoriser le développement de structures d'accueil extrafamilial et extrascolaire pour les enfants jusqu'à la fin de la scolarité obligatoire, avec le soutien possible de la Confédération.

Turkey

A new legislation is planned about family support services. It aims to standardize these services which are executed by different institutions (Municipalities, NGO's, others).

Ukraine

The State Programme for the Support of Family until 2010 now realizes in Ukraine. It was affirmed the Government of Ukraine (February, 19, 2007, N 244). Government of Ukraine is working for changes in the institutional framework for family policies.

United Kingdom

No major changes planned.