

## 1. FAMILY POLICY: INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND OBJECTIVES

### 1.2 Main objectives and policy drivers

#### ii) Main concerns and policy drivers underlying the objectives

#### Austria

Demographic changes;  
Social security for families - family and child-poverty;  
Unfulfilled desire for children.

#### Azerbaijan

One of the major factors for focusing on the above mentioned areas in family policy is the ever changing trends and demands of modern life, that challenge deep rooted traditions of families in Azerbaijan. These changes often affect mainly young families where men and women need to adjust to the demands of market economy and speedy social-economic developments in the country. Besides economic factors the recent findings show that reconsideration of gender roles in society and family, demographic changes, more open relations with the foreign countries as well as other factors stipulated by closer involvement of Azerbaijan in European integration processes urge the need to develop special governmental programs and action plans.

#### Belgium

La communauté flamande

In the Belgian federal State system, concern and policy drivers differ among the various levels of public authorities. Basically, they reflect the division of issues they are responsible for.

A major concern of the Flemish Government, for example, is to further the welfare and well-being of all families, parents and children alike. It is felt that this focus needs the provision of appropriate care, by various actors and through different types of care. The Government has special public agencies to regulate, subsidize and monitor all types of care provisions on their behalf.

La région wallonne

Objectifs opérationnels :

Relations intrafamiliales en déstructuration :

1. Vieillesse de la population :

- Maintenir de la personne âgée à domicile : diversifier les formules d'accueil et développer des alternatives à la maison de repos, améliorer la coordination du secteur de l'aide et des soins à domicile et agir sur le pouvoir d'achat de la personne âgée ...

- Quand le maintien à domicile n'est vraiment plus possible, favoriser le bien-être de nos aînés en institution : moderniser et développer les maisons de repos ...

- Lutter contre la maltraitance des aînés : cerner les cas de maltraitance des personnes âgées et les sortir de l'ombre, créer une agence coordonnée de lutte contre la maltraitance de la personne âgée (écoute et prise en charge) ...

2. Lutte contre la violence intrafamiliale :

- Violence faite aux femmes : travailler en réseau, couvrir l'ensemble du territoire wallon, ouverture d'une ligne verte, renforcer les équipes d'hébergement des victimes, accompagner les acteurs de violences familiales ...

- Femmes et précarité : identifier l'ensemble des mesures prises de manière transversale pour lutter contre la précarisation

galopante et évaluer leur efficacité ...

### 3. Accueil de la petite enfance :

- Développer les possibilités d'accueil des enfants en bas âge en Wallonie afin de répondre aux besoins grandissants : financement de projets d'infrastructures émanant de centres publics d'action sociale et d'ASBL (NB : pour le surplus, il s'agit d'une compétence de la Communauté française) ...

### 4. Faire face et reconstruire suite à la perte de repères :

- Optimiser l'offre en matière de santé mentale : développer l'accessibilité des services de santé mentale (structure ambulatoire pluridisciplinaire qui assure accueil, diagnostic et traitement psychiatrique) en RW, mieux répondre aux attentes et aux besoins des patients et des professionnels du secteur ...

- Centres de planning familial (rôle d'appui et de conseil aux personnes désorientées affectivement) : promouvoir la décentralisation des CPF afin de mieux rencontrer les besoins spécifiques de la population et créer de nouvelles antennes de proximité destinées à un public fragilisé là où il n'y a pas encore accès ...

- Assuétudes et apparition de nouveaux comportements d'addiction : alcoolisme, addiction aux drogues, au jeu, cyberdépendance, sniffing ou autre "bingedrinking" ou "biture expresse" auprès des jeunes : intégrer leur traitement à une politique de santé en phase avec son temps, s'appuyer sur les acteurs de terrain et le monde associatif confrontés à la problématique, consolider et pérenniser le secteur, lui permettre de développer des projets en réponse aux situations observées sur le terrain, mieux comprendre les nouveaux comportements d'addiction pour prendre des décisions plus pertinentes et efficaces ...

### 5. Accueil de la personne handicapée :

La famille occupe une place d'importance dans la réflexion menée en RW en matière d'intégration qui cible le bien-être de la personne handicapée.

- Appel à projet sur le répit : le "répit" désigne toutes les initiatives qui permettent à la famille et à la personne en situation de handicap de souffler, de se distancier de son milieu de vie habituel, de prendre du recul ...

## Bosnia and Herzegovina

Rights of families with children.

## Bulgaria

Bulgaria is no exception from the other European countries in terms of demographic development trends. The analysis of the demographic situation over the last two decades clearly shows a string of unfavourable trends that are similar to trends in other European countries: steady decrease in birth rate; decrease and aging of birth contingents; high total mortality rate; sharp drop in the natural population growth; large share of extramarital births; accelerated aging of the population.

More specific and differing for Bulgaria from the other European countries are several extremely worrying demographic trends:

- The marriage rate is decreasing and the family model is changing – there are trends of forming a new kind of family behaviour: cohabitation with a partner without an official marriage. Surveys show that as a result of the impact of this trend, the birth rate is dropping.
  - The rate of increasing the average life expectancy in Bulgaria, especially since 1990, are extremely slow and in some cases they do not even exist or are negative.
  - The health situation of the population has deteriorated with cases of difficult access to and lower quality of medical services.
  - The education situation of the population has deteriorated with cases of difficult access to and lower quality of education.
- This is why the Government adopted a National Strategy for Demographic Development of the Republic of Bulgaria 2006-2020. This is the Government's answer to the demographic drop in the country and the demographic change which Europe is facing.

## Croatia

Descending fertility rate



A change of age structure of population (aging population)  
Gender equality  
Promotion of rights and improvement of children's position  
Prevention of domestic violence

## Cyprus

Family policies are based on the premise that the family forms the basic unit around which societal institutions are built. Although families in Cyprus are still relatively close and child-centred, demographic and socio-economic changes have challenged traditional family roles.

The main concerns underpinning the objectives mentioned under 1.2. i) include:

- changing family forms, e.g. nuclear family with less support from the extended family, fewer children, drop in fertility, increasing divorce and re-marriage, single parent families, reconstituted families etc,
- increase in the complexity of family problems, including financial difficulties, with negative effects on children,
- changing family roles, e.g. increased female participation in the labour market and the need to reconcile family and work obligations.

## Czech Republic

The main principle of the realization of family policy is to balance inequalities between families with and without children and to abstain from any interference with the autonomy of the families with respect to the arrangement of the family life, including the distribution of obligations with respect to child care and household and the realization of their own strategies leading to the harmonization of the professional and family life.

## Denmark

Combat negative social inheritance (day-care institutions)  
Socially vulnerable families

## Estonia

The main concern is drop in fertility.

## Finland

Reconciliation of work and family, including gender equality and encouraging men using family leaves and to participate in child care. Increasing amount of children taking in to care due to social exclusion and social problems of families and parents.

Increasing number of families with children who are under the poverty line. Fertility rate in the long run.

## France

Helping families, particularly by sustaining the solvency of the most vulnerable;  
Looking after child welfare.

## Germany

A sustainable family policy needs strong partners. Not only the Federal, State and local authorities organizations are responsible here. Active support is also required from other sectors – companies, trades unions, charitable bodies and churches.

## Greece

The main reasons that led to the choice of these policies and objectives are:

- Demographic problem (ageing of population and declining of births)
- The need for further increase of employment and particularly that of women
- The need for reduction of poverty and social exclusion with emphasis in the children's poverty
- The need for breaking off the intergeneration circle of poverty
- The need for further promoting of equality and fighting of discriminations
- The need for protection of the institution of family.

## Hungary

The main concerns are the following:

- 19 % of the children live in poverty,
- drop in fertility.

## Iceland

Gender equality along the lines of intersectionality (i.e. equality of people regardless of factors such as sexuality, ethnic and cultural background, etc.) and children's well-being. The drivers of policy are traditional actors such as political parties and interest groups.

## Ireland

- Persistent high risk of poverty rates among child and lone parent families, in particular, despite significant spending on supports for

# Council of Europe Family Policy Database

[www.coe.int/familypolicy/database](http://www.coe.int/familypolicy/database)



COUNCIL OF EUROPE    CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

same,  
- Increased participation of women in the labour market, with increasing need for childcare and other supports to assist families in reconciling work and family life,  
- Aging of the population with the increased demands this will place on provision of adequate income support and meeting caring needs.

## Italy

Reconciliation of work and family. Drop in fertility rate. Family poverty.

## Latvia

The main concerns of the national family policy is to provide for every family such conditions that would make it possible for those families to take care for as many children as they want. Additionally one of the most important concerns of the government in the field of state family policy is related to the most vulnerable families subject to social exclusion, poverty.

The main concerns among policy drivers what had actualised these objectives are low level of birth rate and necessity to improve living conditions for families with children, including disabled children. The number of recipients of state social benefits for families with children gradually has fallen each previous year. It should be noted that such trends have been in evidence since 1996, which confirms the long-term decline in the level of birth rate. Also the amounts of state social benefits for families with children have been insufficient for lending substantial help to families with children, especially with disabled children, and it have not covered their additional expenditures on child raising in the form of adequate cash payments. Therefore the government of Latvia and Ministry of Welfare have been consequently implemented and implements at present social policy on facilitation of demographic situation in Latvia and improvement of living standards in relation to families with children increasing the state support in the form of cash payments that are received by families with children and disabled children. Also one of the main concerns and policy drivers is gender equality – ensuring the possibility of reconciling family and work life for both men and women.

## Lithuania

The main driver and the main concern – drop in fertility and poverty of families with children.  
Also the reconciliation of work and family life as one of the six gender equality priorities of the EU Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men involves an important issue of child care which is one of the biggest concerns.

## Luxembourg

Il s'agit de concilier mieux vie familiale et professionnelle, lutter contre les inégalités surtout des enfants, et contre la pauvreté et finalement maintenir une certaine cohésion sociale dans une société où les étrangers avoisinent voire dépassent (population active) la population résidente.

# Council of Europe Family Policy Database

[www.coe.int/familypolicy/database](http://www.coe.int/familypolicy/database)



## Malta

The strengthening of family units.

## Moldova

Not mentioned /not applicable.

## Monaco

Le développement et l'éducation de l'enfant.  
Cette politique n'est pas sous-tendue par des considérations d'ordre démographique la population active de la Principauté étant majoritairement constituée de travailleurs frontaliers.

## Montenegro

Enhance children protection.

## Netherlands

The main concerns are: prioritisation of prevention and early intervention; collaboration between child services agencies in responding to the needs of children and families; strengthening the role of local authorities through the introduction of youth and family centres. Policy drivers are: reducing educational disadvantage for young children at risk of lagging behind; increasing the uptake of childcare so as to promote women's participation in the workforce; and dealing with young people who cause difficulties in their communities.

## Norway

The child's best is an underlying high priority goal. Also the individual rights for a person as stated in antidiscrimination law and human right conventions are much used in political debates also when it comes to family policy. To balance these values – family versus individual, parent versus child, father versus mother - are an ongoing concern.

# Council of Europe Family Policy Database

[www.coe.int/familypolicy/database](http://www.coe.int/familypolicy/database)



## Poland

The main concern is to improve the situation of family with children (drop in poverty rate, combating social exclusion).

## Portugal

• The main policy drivers of the strategy followed by the government to promote the reconciliation of work and family life are linked to:

a) a difficult economic context where the high levels of women's (and men's) participation in the labour market need to be kept up and increased;

b) a strong emphasis on the building up of gender equality and social equality, with a concern to defend the rights of both women and men to personal and professional self-fulfilment (since women have been traditionally overburdened due to the accumulation of (full-time) work and family responsibilities). On the other hand, women and families in low-income households have had more conciliation problems since low-cost service provision for childcare (and elderly care) is still insufficient (particularly for children 0-3 years old where there has been a great lack of places);

c) child development and social integration is also an important policy driver underlying the service provision strategy. The development of affordable childcare services (crèches and preschools) and longer opening hours are seen to have an important impact not only on work/family balance but also on children's social integration and development (it improves school achievement, integrates all children in the educational system and reduces drop-out; it also promotes the social inclusion of children in disadvantaged areas/families, acting as an important policy measure in the prevention and combat against social inequalities).

d) the drop in birth rates and the building up of pro-natalist measures is another important policy concern which has contributed to keeping 'reconciliation' policy high on the agenda. Low income levels and insufficient service provision are frequently emphasized in public discourse as constraints to having children.

e) Apart from the promotion of gender and social equalities, the struggle against regional inequalities may also be seen as a policy driver of the service provision strategy since one of the objectives of PARES Programme is to improve coverage rates in the metropolitan areas Lisbon and Oporto (in particular in the peripheral suburbs).

• Decreasing trends in birth rates combined with the rise in life expectancy and population ageing are the main drivers of the recent policies to promote fertility. This policy is seen as important not only for the future of society but also to ensure the sustainability of the social security system (other measures, such as changes in the age of retirement, have also been introduced to improve sustainability). In 2006 the fertility rate in Portugal was 1.36 compared with 1.57 in 1991 and 1.5 in 2001 (1.56 in 2000) while ageing rates were 68 in 1991 and 112 in 2006. It is in this context that the government has launched the above mentioned financial measures to promote fertility.

• Principles of social justice (the struggle against social inequalities) act as the main policy drivers of governmental initiatives to combat poverty. The government has put an emphasis on horizontal redistribution by extending family benefits to all immigrant families living in Portugal, by introducing higher benefits for lone parent families and families with two or more children. However, vertical redistribution still persists as the main policy framework since the entitlement to family benefits continues to be selective and means tested.

## Russian Federation

Major causes of the stirring up the family policies fulfilment are, among other factors, low birth rate, high level of family instability (high divorce rate), great number of deprivation of parental rights, and necessity to improve the development of children.

## Serbia

For the realisation of the general goals set in the Strategies, specific objectives have been identified, simultaneously identified as policy drivers related to reduction of the level of fertility, i.e. focused to overcoming of the major issues, such as economic costs of child rearing, conciliation of family and working life, psychological costs of parenting, and reproductive health of the adolescents. Special attention is given to fight against infertility, promotion of the preservation and reinforcement of women's health the aim of which is healthy motherhood and education of the overall population. The major problems in achievement of equality between genders is the fact that the Gender Equality Law has not yet been passed and is pending and which pertains to economic empowerment of the women, i.e., to the aim related to creation of systemic preconditions for the equal opportunity policy in the economy, i.e. development of the European model of "balance between the career and family". The most important development is adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia providing for the obligation of the state to implement equal opportunity policy for both genders.

## Slovakia

The Government of the SR supports equality between men and women as a crucial factor of the development of democracy and the execution of human rights while fulfilling the obligations resulting from the Lisbon strategy as well as international treaties. The Government of the SR supported the creation of institutional mechanisms for applying the gender aspect and the introduction of gender mainstreaming strategy.

The Department of Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities was established at MoLSAF SR, to act in the direct controlling competence of the minister of labour, social affairs and family. The Slovak Government Council of the SR for Gender Equality was established on 1 January 2008, together with its Executive and Consultation Committee. The Standing Committee on Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities was also established within the Committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on Social Issues and Housing.

In the interest of creating conditions for the favourable mental, physical and social development of children and dignified conditions for the active support of young families and the growth of the birth rate, the government takes measures in the area of state social assistance by annually increasing the individual financial contributions intended for families with children, taking the form of single and repeated state social benefits and in the form of introducing new financial contributions upon the origin and existence of life events, including childbirth and childcare.

From 1 February 2008, the government introduced a one-off bonus to the first child birth allowance in the amount of SKK 20,440 and from 1 January 2008, a bonus to the monthly child allowance in the amount of SKK 300, if the parents of a dependent child are old-age pensioners or disability pensioners and for such objective reasons they do not carry out gainful activity and are therefore not entitled to a tax bonus on their child.

## Slovenia

Alongside the Programme for children and youth 2006-2016, improving child development.

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted also the Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for women and men, 2005-2013 (ReNPEMZM), a strategic document which defines objectives and measures as well as key policy makers for the promotion of gender equality in different areas of life of women and men in the Republic of Slovenia in the Period 2005 - 2013.

Although the fertility rate in EU -27 rose in the last few years, Slovenia is in the group of European counties with the lowest fertility rate. Therefore the priority of Slovenian policy drivers are also demographic goals. Due to demographic changes, societies are facing new relationships between generations. These are the main objective of the Conference "Intergenerational Solidarity for Cohesive and Sustainable Societies" Brdo pri Kranju, 27-29 April 2008, during Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU.

# Council of Europe Family Policy Database

[www.coe.int/familypolicy/database](http://www.coe.int/familypolicy/database)



## Spain

We may say that achieving gender equality and equal opportunities for all citizens is one of the main concerns. In this line it is understood that any family or social policy alternative must bear in mind the intention of achieving equality between men and women, avoiding alternatives that may have negative effects. The alternative of family support services seems to be the best offer to guarantee equality for men and women.

It also has been a main concern to achieve further and better rights in Family Law and Labour rights to protect people, families and children from social exclusion.

## Sweden

The policy drivers underlying the objectives mentioned above are not to see families with children as a uniform group, but rather to recognise that all families are different and have different wishes and needs. The new Government therefore wants to stress the importance of freedom of choice and flexibility. Family policy should respect the choices made by individual families and be directed at providing support based on their different financial circumstances and opportunities. In this context, the different needs of children also play an important role.

The main concern according to the Government is to create good conditions for work so as to give all families with children opportunities for good financial living standards. The possibility of combining working life with family life for families with children should therefore be facilitated. In this way, the conditions for gender equality are also created.

## Switzerland

En Suisse, la politique familiale n'a pas un but nataliste. Elle tend plutôt à mettre en place les conditions-cadre nécessaires afin d'assurer à chacun le libre choix d'avoir ou non des enfants. En mettant en avant la conciliation de la vie familiale et professionnelle, la politique suisse entend contribuer à l'égalité entre femmes et hommes, encourager les femmes qui souhaitent travailler tout en ayant des enfants mais aussi répondre aux besoins de l'économie. Pour ce qui est des mesures à caractère financier, elles servent à compenser partiellement les coûts importants liés à la présence d'enfants et à éviter que certaines familles, notamment les familles nombreuses et les familles monoparentales, ne tombent dans la précarité.

## Turkey

Demographical changes are the main policy drivers. These changes similar to ones existing in worldwide are the fall in the birth rate, rise in aged population, the increasing importance of need of family support services related to urbanization, increase in divorce rate, and decrease in tendency for marriage.



## Ukraine

- Domestic violence;
- Issues of lone families;
- Social welfare families.

## United Kingdom

- To reduce child poverty and ameliorate its impacts on early child development, through universal and targeted financial support to families:
- To reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.
  - To enable children to fulfil their educational potential, in particular to close the achievement gap between children from disadvantaged and from better off families.