

1. FAMILY POLICY: INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND OBJECTIVES

1.2 Main objectives and policy drivers

iv) Have there been major shifts in the profile of family policy over the last decade? Which issues have been in debate and what is the position of the different political parties?

Austria

One of the major shifts is, that caring for children is seen as very important for our society in general and as a task, which should be appreciated by the society.

Therefore the child care allowance act was introduced: child care allowance can be received by all parents – not only those, who were working before their child was born.

The societal importance of caring for dependent people should also be taken into consideration.

Since about 1998/1999 there have been introduced voluntary measures in companies, which help parents to reconcile family-life and work-life.

A recent amendment to the child care allowance act makes it easier for parents to re-enter the labour market.

Azerbaijan

All the main policy decisions and legislative acts concerning development in family policy have been adopted within last decade.

Belgium

Yes.

From 1999 till mid 2004 the Flemish Government had no Minister carrying 'Family' formally as one of its competencies. Instead, a Minister from the Green Party was in charge of Well-Being and Equal Opportunities ('Welzijn en Gelijke Kansen').

The current coalition (Flemish Government, 2004-2009) again includes members from the Christian Democratic Party. One of them carries the responsibilities for 'Well-Being, Health and Family' ('Vlaams Minister voor Welzijn, Volksgezondheid en Gezin').

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Ministry for Family, Youth and Sport has been existing for a third year.

During 2007 the Family Law of Brčko District of BiH (Official Gazette of Brčko District of BiH, no. 23/07) was passed and it superseded the Family Law of Republic of BiH from 1979.

Council of Europe Family Policy Database

www.coe.int/familypolicy/database



Bulgaria

Public and political opinion is united in its support for the family policy which is set as a priority in the Bulgarian Government Programme 2005-2019.

Croatia

Family-related measures have not been completely consistent over the past 15 years. In 1996, the National Program for Demographic Development was adopted, which has for the first time clearly defined new population and family policy. The Program comprised of a series of measures for families with children (generous child allowances, favourable housing loans, three years of maternity leave for mothers with three or more children, etc.), but it was not implemented due to the lack of financial resources. In 2003, the Government adopted the National Family Policy as a broad system of social support for the family. The measures it contained were related to housing, labour market, family services, promotion of parenting, health care for mothers and children, and family allowances. Special attention was paid to gender equality and female employment. But the National Family Policy was not implemented either because the Government changed at the end of 2003.

Current Government (in power since 2003) adopted several measures directed to improving material status of mothers and families with children (reinstalled three year maternity leave for mothers with three or more children, prolonged maternity leave for unemployed mothers, increased maternal benefit, etc.).

In 2006, National Population Policy was adopted defining different measures in the field of sustainable economic growth, family allowances and tax deductions, reconciliation of family and work life, childcare system and health protection of mother and child. Main emphasize was on population effects.

Cyprus

- Shifts in the profile of family policy over the last decade pertain to the emphasis that has been placed on expanding measures for the reconciliation of work and family life (described under section 3), reforming the tax system (described under section 2.2) and supporting vulnerable families and those with dependent members (described under section 2.3).

- The Republic of Cyprus has a presidential system and the president is elected every 5 years. During the last decade there have been three presidents, each supported by a variety of political parties. There have been no major disagreements between the parties on family policy issues. It should be noted that legislative power in Cyprus is exercised by the House of Representatives consisting of deputies from different political parties who are elected every five years. No significant drawbacks have been experienced in promoting legislation pertaining to family policy.

- The manifesto of the New Government makes specific reference, inter alia, to modernising social protection systems, increasing the rates of both public assistance and social insurance, strengthening and expanding provisions for the reconciliation of work and family life and establishing a specialised agency to deal with demographic issues.

Czech Republic

Most of the changes of the family policy arose in connection with the modification of parental leave and the financial security of the parents during the period of child care for children under 3, 4 years of age. As of 1.1.2001 men are allowed to take parental leave before the child reaches 3 years of age. In the preceding years there was a shift in the conditions of provision of Parental Allowance which are linked to the extent of the child being entrusted to child care facilities while the parent is authorized to receive such contributions, and with respect to the limitations related to the extra gains. Currently, there are no limitations on extra gains during periods when a parent is in receipt of Parental Allowance. In 2007 the Parental Allowance more than doubled. Since 1.1.2008 the parents were provided with more flexibility by introduction of three-speed disbursement of the parental contribution (see below). During the 90s the family support was reduced in practical terms to the social issues where support was provided mainly to families in disadvantaged social situations.

Czech Republic did not have any concept of family policy as such. Family promotion and support came to prominence in the terms of interest of political parties not only until 2004.

The left-oriented political parties tend to have a liberal approach to the families, focus on collective child care for children under 3 years, promise rapid increase of benefits, resolution of the housing issues for young families. Right-oriented parties incline toward a more traditional understanding of the concept of family, focus on individual care, and promote autonomy of the families.

Denmark

Yes, The overall focus on the reconciliation of Family and Working Life as well as children's rights has increased dramatically during the past decade.

Estonia

The main shift in the family policy was the implementation of parental benefit in 2004. The concern behind was a strong drop in fertility.

Finland

Not very big or fundamental shifts.

France

Several reforms to family law: introduction of the PACS – Civil Solidarity Contract, simplification of divorce procedures, equality of types of descent, liberalisation of choice of surname, which may henceforth be the mother's or a combination of the parents' names, etc.

Issues of equal opportunity, child welfare or crime prevention have recently allowed an overhaul of certain provisions and practices with regard to (depending on the subject-matter) parents' empowerment, the scope of intervention of local and regional authorities, obligations and limitations connected with certain occupations in relation to families or young people...

Concern for better balance between family life and working life with the establishment of paternity leave available to all fathers at the birth of a child, or the creation on 1 January 2004 of the benefit granted on the arrival of an infant (prestation d'accueil du jeune

Council of Europe Family Policy Database

www.coe.int/familypolicy/database



enfant - PAJE), awarded to 90% of families. In addition, the apportionment of maternity leave between the periods preceding and following confinement has been relaxed and there is now a resolve to vary the types of provision for infants. All these subjects have given rise to debates within the consultation bodies and instruments (according to theme, the family conference, General Assembly of the National Union of Family Associations, board of management of the National Family Benefits Fund, etc., and of course in Parliament when the measure pertained to a legislative act).

Germany

Family policy has become increasingly important in the public sphere, in politics and in corporate life in recent years and has become a high priority and attracted a high level of attention. The topics relating to sustainable family policy are discussed in depth and comprehensively.

Greece

The role of family in Greece is particularly important since, it has historically functioned as an informal safety net. The aid of family and the exploitation of multiple advantages that these mean for the social prosperity have been the central points of social policy of our country the last few years. The last decade the policies for the family have changed their orientation and are focused mainly in the reconciliation work and family life. These more completed policies use traditional tools and aim in the support of all members of the family and mainly women. During the past, the policies were more fragmentary, had the character of allowance granting and aimed mainly in the economic support of family.

Family policies over the last years enclose new tendencies such as the ones:

- Decentralisation of social services in regional and local government level
- Relief of woman from the exclusive care of children and the elderly, so that her entry in the labour market is facilitated through the individualised and more anthropocentric approach of the needs of social teams with special needs
- Effort for a more effective monitoring and planning of social policy via the collaboration of central administration with other controlling and researching mechanisms
- Defence of the rights of children
- Guarantee of quality of life.

In this frame the next policies are implemented:

Decentralisation of social services granting

- As far as the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity is concerned, the following state-owned day nurseries have been founded and financed by the State Budget: 1306 day nurseries with capacity of 78.000 infants (aged from 2.5 years old up to their registration to the Primary School) and 132 day nurseries with capacity of 10.000 children (aged from 8 months up to their registration to the Primary School). These nurseries have been founded for the parents who work and for the economically weak families giving priority to those children who because of social reasons need special social care (for example orphans, children of unmarried mothers, of divorced parents, children belonging to families with many children or children having parents with disabilities). The parents pay a minimum of board fees, depending on their family income, contributing this way to the amelioration of living conditions and to the upgrading of the services provided to their children. According to article 12 of the Law 2880/01 (official journal of the government 9/A/30-1-2001) all public day nurseries fall nowadays under the competencies of the local authorities and are operating as community or municipality Legal Entities of Public Law.
- The Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity, in the framework of strengthening the Social Policy at national level, has promoted the voting of Law 3106/10-2-03 (official journal of the government 30 A'). This law is about the regional decentralisation of National System of Social Care. It aims at the decentralisation of social care services and their institutional connection with the health services, as well as the co-operation and the co-ordination of all the agencies that are involved in combating social exclusion and belong to the municipalities and communities in the administrative region of which they are operating (these agencies provide, among other services, counselling support to families, children, adolescents and other vulnerable groups). The goal of this new institutional framework is to provide more effectively and more rapidly its services to the citizens.

Promotion of employment via the operation of social care structures

Council of Europe Family Policy Database

www.coe.int/familypolicy/database



- According to the joint-ministerial Decision of the Minister of Interior, the Minister of Employment and Social Security and the Minister of Health and Social Solidarity the Regional Operational Programs (PEP) and the Operational Program (EP) "Employment and Professional Training" that has been approved in the framework of 3rd Community Support Framework, include actions concerning: (in the framework of the PEP) the creation of new structures or even new departments in the already existing structures of the day nurseries such as Day Nurseries of Integrated Care (VSOF - departments for infants or children with disabilities) or Creative Entertainment Centres for Children (KDAP), or Creative Entertainment Centres for Children with Disabilities (KDAP MEA), (in the framework of the EP) the continuation or extension of the operation of the already existing structures that had been co-financed by the European Social Fund in the framework of the 2nd Community Support Framework.
- In the framework of the 3rd Community Support Framework two new structures have been established: Day Care Centres for the Elderly (KIFI) and "Assistance at Home". These two programmes aim at offering care services to old people and to people with disabilities, offering by this way to the women who take care of them, the opportunity to enter the labour market. The Day Care Centres are units of day hospitality for people who are not able to take care of themselves (because of kinetic or mental disabilities, etc) and whose family because of working, social, financial problems or even health problems can not respond to the care responsibilities towards them.
- In addition to all these, the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity, in order to support and protect the elderly, implements the programme "Tele-assistance at Home".

Collaboration in the field of planning and controlling

- In compliance with the law 2920/2001 (official journal of the government 131 A') the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity has created the Inspectors Body for Health and Welfare (SEIP) which among other things has the authority to intervene on the First degree Local Authority Agencies which provide welfare services in order to supervise the quality and the efficiency of the facilities and to take the necessary safety measures ensuring the healthy living of the children and of the personnel.
- In addition to all these, in compliance with the provisions of article 7 of the law 3106/2003 a legal entity of public law has been created under the name of National Council of Social Care (ESIKF) residing in Athens which was later on renamed to IKPA (Institute of Social Protection and Solidarity). This Council is supervised and monitored by the Minister of Health and Social Solidarity. The aim of IKPA is to assist the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity in the drawing of welfare policies. Moreover, IKPA observes the National Registry of Adoptions and the National Registry of foster parents and safeguards their confidentiality.
- The Institute of Social Demography and Research (IKDE) was founded in compliance with article 6 of the Law 3454/2006, resides in Athens, and it is under the supervision and control of the Minister of Health. It is the research institution that analyzes monitors and evaluates the demographic policy measures and programmes and provides scientific support to public and private agencies.

Defending the rights of children

- Our country with the law 2101/92 ratified the Convention of the United Nations concerning the rights of the child. In the same time, law 3094/2003 has re-defined the competences and the way of operation of the Greek Ombudsman and established the Greek Ombudsman for Children. The mission of the Greek Ombudsman includes the protection and the promotion of the rights of the child. Any child or the parents, foster parents or relative of first degree have the right to ask directly or sent their complaint to the Ombudsman for Children. The Ombudsman, after a thorough investigation, forwards a relevant report in case it considers that the competent judiciary authority should intervene.
- Moreover in our country a Network for the Prevention and Fighting against Corporal Punishment of Children has been created. Founding members of this Network are: the Ministry of National Education and Religion, the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity, the General Secretariat of Youth, the General Secretariat of Education of Adults, the Institute of Social Protection and Solidarity, the Institute of the Child's Health, the Greek Paediatric Society and the Greek National Committee of UNICEF. The aim of the Network, inter alia, is:
 - The promotion of obliteration of each form of corporal punishment of children exerted by anyone because punishment violates their fundamental rights (International Convention of the UN concerning the Rights of the Child - N2101/1992), it offends their personality, it familiarizes them with violence as a means of solving their problems and it is dangerous for their mental and body health.
 - The support of actions aiming at the prevention and the fighting against corporal punishment of children by adults towards children or in front of them.
 - And finally the Network aims at fighting the social and legal acceptance of corporal punishment of children in our country, so that children can be brought up and educated according to the new modern pedagogical and educational methods.

Guarantee of life quality

- Enlargement of attendance in recreational and cultural activities: social tourism - children's camps, access in theatre, cinema, museums and archaeological sites/sports (programs of Workers' Social benefits Organisation).
- The Housing policy: extensive program of manufacture of working residences, issuing of housing loans with particularly favourable terms, special programs for families with more than 4 children or lone parent families, reduction of social contribution prerequisites in cases of protection of invalid child, concession of residences without draw, exceptionally for beneficiaries that they protect more than five children and, subsidy of rent etc (programs of Workers' Housing Organisation).

Council of Europe Family Policy Database

www.coe.int/familypolicy/database



• The Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity applies housing policies, provides pensions to uninsured old aged persons, as well as attendance in Camps and Spa centre therapies for old individuals.

The political parties with European orientation recognize the same challenges, agree with the priorities and the objectives set in the frame of family policy; although there are disagreements as for the mixture of policies selected as for the realisation of the actions.

Hungary

There were some changes, but the major goals remained the same.

Iceland

There have been some major shifts in the profile of family policy in following areas: Growing legal rights of children, including their rights to care from both parents; major shift in the legal rights of same sex couples; issues regarding immigrants and their families have gained increased attention in policy making and a radical changes in child care policies have taken place: increase in volumes in public day care, after school care and equal rights of both parents to paid parental leave with 80% wage compensation.

Ireland

- Greater focus on activation of people working age in receipt of welfare payments, particularly lone parents and also those in receipt of disability payments
- Tax and welfare supports; should these be provided on an individual or family basis
- Support for childcare while acknowledging role of parents in the home,
- Provision of childcare support via state support on supply side or through more general payments which could contribute to childcare costs of parents both in employment and support those in the home,
- Targeted child income support for low income families or continued increases to the universal child income support payment.

Italy

In the period under scrutiny, the various Governments which followed each other aimed at providing families with more economic resources, in particular by reorganizing tax regimes. More in detail, family income support was provided by transforming deductions for family charges into tax allowances - equal for everybody - which have been considerably increased. Furthermore, child benefits have also been raised for employees and economically dependent workers. The system for the calculation of benefits has also been reformed, given that the old one risked penalizing low-income families even for small increases in their income.

In recent years Government action has focused more closely on larger families, granting specific tax allowances and increasing child benefits. Benefits have also been raised for families in which at least one member is disabled or in which a parent is deceased. In this framework, the central Government and the local authorities also focused on the need to reduce the tariffs and costs of utilities and services for families with four or more children.

In addition, the Finance Act 2007 laid the foundations for a wide-ranging family policy and for a series of structural measures. In particular, specific actions have been taken to address the issues of temporary work, low birth rate and population ageing.

Up to now, the present Government has outlined the new guidelines which will drive its action in the field. In particular, the main focus will be on family support, also through the introduction of the so-called "family quotient" which takes into account the number of members making up the family unit. The Decree no. 93 on the protection of the purchasing power of families lifted the Municipal Real Estate Tax as well as taxes on overtime pay and it introduced new rules on the renegotiation of home loans. The

Council of Europe Family Policy Database

www.coe.int/familypolicy/database



Government will also reintroduce birth grants to try to increase birth rate and it will reduce the VAT on milk, food and other products for children.

Latvia

Over the last decade there have been significant shifts in the profile of the family policy. Starting from the year 2003 gradually state family policy has been developed in order to improve social security measures for families wishing to have children (financial measures, services, informative and educational materials have been provided for families).

The major shifts in the profile of family policy (state social insurance and state social benefits for families with children) over the last decade were:

- on 1 January 1998 a non – profit public joint stock company “State Social Insurance Agency” was established in the place of the State Social Insurance Fund, taking over its obligations and rights, its main task was the administration of the social insurance budget and state social services, including state social insurance benefits and state social benefits for families with children;
 - amendments in the legislation (passing the Law on State Social Benefits on 31 October 2002) as the result: state social benefits are determined as an autonomous social security field, which optimizes the provision of state benefits for residents in the framework of state social benefit system; the scope of recipients of state family benefit and the amount of state family benefit has increased; the payment period for child care benefit granted for child caring was reduced (from 3 to 2 years) with the aim of stimulating a person’s earlier return into the labour market;
 - introduction of paternity benefit in 1 January 2004, determining the rights of the father to the paternity leave and benefit at the birth of a child, with the aim to promote the participation of fathers in the care of children and support a lifestyle which harmonises family life and employment;
 - the improvement of the child care benefit system on 1 January 2005 – the implementation of a new double-level (flat-rate and earnings-related) child care benefit system, applying the social insurance principles and earnings-related benefit to employed persons who take care of a child up to the age of one year and flat-rated benefit to unemployed person who take care of a child up to the age of one year;
 - in accordance with the amendments to the State Social Benefits Law, which came into force on 1 January 2005, and the respective regulations of Cabinet of Ministers following from it, the policy making authority in the area of guardianship and foster families, as well as the granting and payment of the benefit to the foster families and benefits to the guardians, were passed over to the Ministry for Children and Family Affairs;
 - in 2005-2007 two new benefits for children with disabilities were introduced: Support to children suffering from the celiac disease on 1 January 2005, Disabled child care benefit no 1 January 2006;
 - in order to encourage implementation of gender mainstreaming within the area of family life and child care, as also improve the balance between private and working life on 1 January 2008 the new social insurance benefit – parent’s benefit, which has replaced earning related Child raising benefit for socially insured persons who are raising children under 1 year of age, was introduced.
- The main issues what have been in debate and policy agenda in the area of family policy were connected first fully with the demographic situation in Latvia and increasing the state support for families with children. The number of recipients of state social benefits for families with children tend to gradually decrease every year. Families with children are most of all exposed to various social risks, connected with the decrease of income due to the birth and care of a child, as well as the inability to provide adequate maintenance for the child. In order to promote the birth rates and improve the quality of life for families with children by enhancing support to them in the form of benefits, in 2004 the Ministry of Welfare worked out the “Conception about increase of state social benefits amounts for families with children”, the implementation of which has brought radical changes to state social benefit system. In the terms of Conception, what was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers in 30 August 2004, implementation some important changes in the sphere of family benefits have been proposed and introduced: the Childcare benefit system were reformed into double level (earnings related and flat-rated levels) system, as also amount of Child birth benefit was increased. On 1 January 2007 of amount of State Family Benefit for the first child in a family was increased from 6 LVL to 8 LVL per month. Also the actual issue which have been in debate is the increase of state support for families with disabled children. As a result of discussions and consultations Ministry of Welfare elaborated and the Saeima (parliament) adopted “Amendments to the Law on State Social Benefits”, which will become effective in 1 January 2006 and introduced the new state social benefit – disable child raising benefit – for persons who are raising disabled children under 18 years of age with heavy physical and functional disturbance and who are needful for special care.
- During the year 2007 one other issue had been actualised within the family policy agenda – the new system of Childcare benefit (introduced on 1 January 2005 double level (earnings related and flat-rated levels) system) did not correspond to the essence of state social benefits – to provide universal state support in the form of cash payments for persons in situations when additional expenditure is needed or when these persons are incapable of obtaining any income – and has a negative impact on the state social benefit system. As a result on 1 January 2008 the new social insurance benefit – parent’s benefit, which has replaced earning related

Council of Europe Family Policy Database

www.coe.int/familypolicy/database



Childcare benefit for socially insured persons who are raising children under 1 year of age, was introduced. The amount of benefit is 70% of the average gross wages upon which contributions have been paid during 12 months, but not less than LVL 63 per month. In contradistinction to Childcare benefit for socially insured persons who are raising children under 1 year of age, which was paid in maximum amount of 392 LVL per month, the maximum amount of parent's benefit is not restricted. In turn socially uninsured persons who are raising children under 1 year of age continue to receive flat rated Childcare benefit.

Lithuania

From 2009 there is a shift in the family policy: in 2009 MoSSL should be rearranged into the Ministry of Family and Social Affair and should take a coordination of all cross-sectoral questions different family policies. Before it family polices were seen as financial assistance for families with children in general, as well as additional financial support for different social groups and as a gender equality issues in the labour and social insurance polices.

Every political party in their political programs has some lines which are related with the family policy. Most attention on different family policy aspects is included into the Program of Conservative - Christian Democrat Party which took most seats in a 2008 Parliament elections.

Luxembourg

Oui.

Moins accentué sur le groupe familial mais plus sur l'enfant ou les parents qui travaillent.

Malgré des différences idéologiques, la plupart des partis politiques arrivent en pratique aux mêmes conclusions et partagent l'approche tout en portant leur vision sur l'un ou l'autre point particulier. Mais les tendances lourdes vont dans le même sens.

Malta

Not applicable, since an official family policy has not been in place.

Moldova

Essential changes took place in the area. The most important are those related to violence in the family issues, trafficking in human beings, gender equality.

Monaco

Non.

Montenegro

New Family Law enacted on 01.09.2007. Like as the Law on Intermediation, which is introducing mediator as a person helping in a family issues.
Widened court jurisdiction in cases of family legal actions and child protection.

Netherlands

In 2007, explicit family policy and an integrated approach were introduced through the appointment of a Minister for Youth and Families and the establishment of a special Interministerial Programme on this issue.

Norway

The major political parties in Norway agree on an active family policy - subsidized day care for children, a long parental leave which involve both mother and father, child allowance to all families, special efforts to prevent children's poverty.
From 1997 to 2000 Norway had what we called a "centre government". The Christian party played a central role in that government. From 2001 to 2005 the government was a coalition centre/right, and since 2005 the government is a coalition calling themselves "red/green".
The centre parties are standing for more traditional (and Christian) family values than the red/green government, want parents to stay more at home with their small children and want to defend and promote lifelong marriage as the best way to live. Both left and right parties are far more liberal in these questions. When it comes to using taxes for better welfare for families, this will often result in a coalition between the centre/left against the right.
The cash benefit was the most important issue in the family policy of the centre government, and quality day care for all families to a reasonable price has been the current government most important family issue.

Poland

The system of family benefits was significantly reformed in 2004. Since then it is more uniformity and selective – benefits depend from exceptional situation in life of family and children, for example child' disability. New benefits were introduced – related to the childbirth or the education.
Since 2004 there has been a debate concerning benefits for lone parents in a situation where the alimony granted by the court are not paid. Such benefit, introduced in 1974, was weeded down in 2004, then – after a lot of outcries of organisations of lone parents - introduced again in 2005 and significantly reformed since 2008.

Portugal

To understand the development of family policies over the last decade and how they have responded to the changes experienced by families we must look at three main periods: the years from 1996 to 2001 (PS minority government), the years from 2002-2004 (centre right-wing coalition government) and the last three years (PS majority government). Compared to the 1980s and early 90s, all three periods feature a more explicit family policy, in the sense that policy included actions and programmes deliberately designed to achieve specific objectives regarding family units or individuals in their family roles. However, the basic framework of the public response to challenges posed by family change as well as the general debate concerning policy goals and family/demographic issues has been different. To examine these developments, we will focus briefly on the most significant changes within three fields of State intervention: the economic protection of the family, the regulation of marriage and relationships, the reconciliation of work and family life. More detailed information on policy measures and public debate concerning family issues during these years may be found in previous reports and research on Portugal (Wall, 1998b; 2001; 2002b; 2004b; 2004c; Almeida and Wall, 2001).

1996-2001

A socialist government promising a renewed interest in social policy objectives and a strong commitment to supporting families, especially socially excluded families, was elected at the end of 1995. In spite of economic constraints and a context dominated by the overriding objective of meeting the Maastricht criteria on monetary union, the economic climate in the late nineties was more favourable than in the preceding years. In the context of a general strengthening of social policies, family policy underlined four main perspectives during this period: improving the safety-net for families and redistribution, developing linkages between family policy and policy for equality, promoting the reconciliation of the work and family life, and defining new public responses to recent changes in family life and living arrangements.

In relation to the economic protection of families, there were two major changes. The first introduced more selectivity in the main cash benefit for families by defining benefit rates which vary according to three (and later four) levels of income. Monthly amounts of benefit were increased for the first, second and third income levels; nevertheless, except for very low-income families (first level) who received a more substantial increase, allowances continued to represent small contributions to total family income. Different rates of benefit for families with many children, with higher benefits for third and subsequent children, were also introduced for all income levels (previously, only low income families were entitled to this).

The second major change was the introduction of income support in Portugal. The "Guaranteed Minimum Income", a non-contributory benefit accompanied by a social integration programme (monitored by Local Follow-up Commissions), was created in 1996 for legally resident individuals lacking resources for satisfying their basic needs. Adults over age 18, or below age 18 if they had dependent children, became entitled to the benefit if their economic resources, or those of their household, were below the amounts defined as income support. Income support entitled an adult to the equivalent of the non-contributory social pension (100 Euros in 1996) and the second adult to the same amount. Other adults were entitled to 70% of this amount and children to 50%. The 1999 report on the implementation of income support showed that one quarter of the households on income support contained elderly persons with very low incomes and that, among the remaining households, a large proportion included adults that were either unemployed or employed in precarious and low-skilled jobs. The introduction of income support led to a vigorous debate in Portuguese society; there were strong criticisms regarding fraudulent claims and doubts were expressed in relation to the possibility of achieving the social inclusion of those on benefit (in particular of minority groups such as gypsies).

Changes regarding the regulation of marriage and relationships also led to a vigorous debate on the legal protection of cohabiting couples (heterosexual and same-sex unions) as well as on the issue of abortion. New legislation extended the rights of cohabiting couples (to adoption, to joint taxation) and strengthened the rights of surviving partners. Same-sex unions were initially set aside from this discussion but became a hotly debated issue after the approval of the above-mentioned law in 1999. New law proposals by the young socialists and other left-wing parties eventually led to the approval, by a narrow margin, of a new law on the legal protection of same-sex unions. It established rights which are similar to those established for heterosexual cohabiting partners but excluded the right to adoption.

The easing of divorce regulations was another change introduced in the late nineties. Married couples no longer have to be married for at least three years before applying for divorce and divorce by mutual consent, for couples with or without children, may be performed by the civil authorities.

Finally, abortion and contraception were also major issues throughout these years but there were only minor changes to the existing 1984 law (extension of the delay for abortion to 24 weeks in cases of malformation of the foetus). Other proposed changes, including the introduction of the availability of abortion on demand up to ten weeks of pregnancy, led to a referendum in 1998 in which liberalisation was rejected by a majority of voters. In the aftermath of the referendum, a discussion on the need for new policy measures was introduced, mainly by the right and centre-right parties. Concern was expressed in relation to the problems of access to family planning and the development of sex education in order to prevent undesired pregnancies and to protect young people from AIDS. It led to the passing of a law on Sexual Education in schools and Access to Family planning.

In contrast to abortion, the reconciliation of work and family life gained considerable ground during these years. Explicit recognition of governmental responsibility for this area was emphasized not only through government programmes which established specific goals concerning leave arrangements and service provision but also through an alteration to the Constitution (in 1997) which introduced, in article 59 related to the rights of workers, the right to a social organization of work allowing for personal fulfilment and for the reconciliation of work and family life.

Developments in this area followed four main lines: the increased protection of women, before and after birth, in the workplace; a movement towards better leave arrangements for working parents with children; a concern to develop and improve care facilities; the promotion of gender equality in leave arrangements and in the workloads of couples. Policy measures taken during the late nineties structured a reconciliation model built up as follows:

a) Leave arrangements: paid maternity leave of 120 days (fully-paid) which may be taken by either parent after the six weeks taken by the mother, 5 days fully-paid leave for fathers (to be taken during the first month after the child's birth), 2 weeks of fully-paid daddy leave (to be taken after the 120 days), unpaid parental leave of 3 months (full-time) or 12 months (part-time), the right to a daily reduction of two hours work during the first year of a child's life (either parent is entitled), the right to miss 30 days work (partially compensated) to care for a sick child below age ten, the right to miss 2 weeks of work (unpaid) to care for a child over age ten or a sick adult relative;

b) Development of childcare facilities: although the increase in the number of crèches was also an objective, measures relating to childcare were more centred on service provision for the three to six age group. The new legislation defined pre-school education as optional but also underlined the State's duty to making the supply of pre-school education universal (see Wall, 1998b). Strategies for the development of provision passed from an initial model based on the idea of State ownership of a "public network" to a pluralistic model characterised by institutional differentiation and a shift towards a private/public mix. In the latter, three main sectors are responsible for provision: the public sector (establishments belonging to local authorities and to the national government), the private non-profit sector which is strongly subsidized by the government, and the private profit-making sector (the private sector network, including both profit and non-profit nurseries, covers slightly over half of all provision). The initial goal was to bring the coverage rate up from 55% in 1995 to 90% of five year olds, 75% of four year olds and 60% of three year olds by the year 2000; this goal was eventually reached in 2002 (coverage rate of 77%).

2002-2004

General elections in March 2002 led to the formation of a new government on the basis of a coalition between the PSD (centre right-wing party) and the CDS, the main conservative party. Against a background of growing economic difficulties and restrictions in social spending, family policy during these years underlined new policy perspectives and objectives. Rather than a focus on the strengthening of social protection and on the need for policy to take into account changing and diverse family forms, governmental concern endorsed a negative outlook on current changes in the family. Governmental actors and agencies during this period highlighted the negative consequences of family break-up, the problems of a declining birth rate, the growing impact of parental incompetence which leads to the institutionalization of too many children, the disadvantages of lone parenthood versus the advantages of the nuclear family made up of first-marriage couples with children, the devaluation of household work and home life. Redistribution and the reconciliation of work and family life were still important underlying concerns but they were more strongly linked to a policy approach emphasizing the preservation of the family (and a preference for a certain model of the family) as its main concern. Family policy in this context shifted its focus towards three other, rather different, major objectives: a commitment to a pro-natalist policy advocating systematic support for large families with three or more children; a pro-life perspective endorsing a non-liberal approach to abortion and proposing policy measures to support pregnant women and vulnerable mothers with young children; a family-building perspective underlining the importance of policy goals such as the expansion of family counselling and mediation services, in order to strengthen family bonds/skills and to prevent marital dissolution, as well as the development of part-time work to facilitate work/life balance for women who wish to prioritize their home-making role.

In relation to the economic protection of families there were important changes in the main family benefit. Conditions of entitlement became less restrictive on the one hand, with entitlement linked to legal "residence" instead of employment and social contributions as in the past, and more restrictive on the other hand, with family allowances available only for lower income families and not for all families. The new benefit system seeks to emphasize two main policy principles: support for low income families and support for large families. Benefit rates introduced in August 2003 exclude higher income families and vary according to five levels of family income and also according to the age of the child as previously (higher benefits for children below 12 months). Support for large families was introduced through new rules for calculating family level of income which are more generous for families with more children (see Wall, 2004b). An annual extra month of benefit was also introduced for families in the first level of income.

The changes produced a more significant increase in benefits for very low income families: for example, a family with 2 children over 12 months where each partner earns the national minimum wage receives 25 instead of 20 Euros (second level of income).

However, taking into account the strong compensatory aim of policy changes - to concentrate substantial support on low income families - the outcome is disappointing as family benefits continue to represent a negligible share of total income. Large families, on the other hand, lost the differentiation of benefit according to birth order, but they kept the possibility of entitlement to cash benefits when they have higher levels of income. In other words, with the new rules for calculating family level of income, even fairly high income families with three or more children are entitled to family benefits. Apart from this advantage, however, the financial support for large families has remained almost the same. In fact, the elimination of birth order differentiation practically cancels the

Council of Europe Family Policy Database

www.coe.int/familypolicy/database



COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

impact introduced by the overall increase in benefit rates, so that a low-income family in the second level of income and with three or four children over age one receives almost the same amount of benefit as before. Overall, however, it is a policy and a governmental discourse that shows systematic support for large families.

With regard to the regulation of marriage and relationships there were no changes during this period. However, the increase in the divorce rate was a topic for some public debate, with governmental parties and agencies expressing concern in relation to this development in family life in Portugal. One of the strongest appeals against this trend was expressed by the Observatory for Family Matters (Ministry for Social Security and Labour). In an official statement the Observatory regarded this trend as harmful for the stability of the family and considered that public policies easing divorce regulations are often the catalysers of the problem. Another issue taken up over the last two years and hotly debated was abortion. The debate was triggered off by the criminal proceedings in the region of Aveiro against seven women who carried out illegal abortions. The "Aveiro" trial, involving the women, their partners and medical staff (17 persons in all) began in December 2003 and reintroduced a vigorous discussion, in parliament and in society, on whether legislation on abortion, which still considers abortion as a crime, should be changed. In October 2003 a new campaign was started by sectors of society in favour of a change in legislation and a Petition was handed in to parliament asking for a new referendum on abortion.

Within the policy framework of a family-building and a pro-natalist perspective, the issue of the reconciliation of work and family life was quite high on the policy agenda. During these years, government actors and agencies stressed the importance of measures in this field and focused strongly on the need to improve the choices of women, in particular through access to more part-time work, to more protection during pregnancy and child-bearing, to longer leaves to care for young children and to part-time pension schemes to care for the very elderly. Policy objectives have thus stressed the State's responsibility in promoting the familiarization of the work/life balance, especially through leave arrangements and the protection of women workers, rather the development of formal care provision.

From the point of view of the protection of women workers and leave arrangements, the package introduced during the nineties was maintained and there were only a few developments. For example, there was an increase in the protection against dismissal from 98 to 120 days after giving birth, the five days paternity leave became obligatory, parents became entitled to a four-hour leave per term to go to their children's school, and large families' right to miss work for 15 days (unpaid) to care for sick children over age 10 was increased by one day for every second child and subsequent children. In relation to part-time work, the new Labour Law (2004) extended the right to part-time work during the unpaid parental leave from 6 to 12 months; the Government also announced its intention to promote part-time work within the civil service and to extend maternity leave (the coalition government fall in 2004 and these changes were not introduced).

In the area of service provision, governmental programmes during this period mainly drew attention to the need for new types of services, such as family counselling services ("Family Support centres"), "pro-life" services to support single pregnant mothers (Centres for Supporting Life) and services to assess institutions that take in children at risk, handicapped persons and elderly persons. The development of service provision to help families care for children and elderly persons was not highlighted in the government's initial programme (see Wall, 2002b), even if new objectives concerning coverage rates for services were eventually set out in the National Plan for Inclusion 2003-2005 in December 2003.

2005-2008 (see also answer to question 1.2 i))

Elected into government again in 2005, the Socialist Party took up its former commitments to reconciliation policy, the promotion of gender equality, and the expansion of services to support families with children and dependent elderly persons. Other issues, such as abortion, poverty, domestic violence, the protection of children, and the regulation of marriage relationships have also been high on the policy agenda (a second referendum led to the approval of a new Law on abortion in 2007).

However, in the context of strong budgetary constraints, falling levels of living and the sharpest drop ever in fertility rates (1.36 in 2006, down from 1.56 in 2000), family policy goals have tended to focus over the last three years on three major objectives: expansion of service provision (see above, question 1.2 i)); economic support for families, especially for the more vulnerable families (see below, question 2.); and the promotion of fertility (see below, questions 2. and 3.).

On the 'reconciliation' agenda for families with children, the major goal is to increase services for the under 3s (up to the Barcelona target of 33% by 2009). Expansion in pre-school education (to reach full coverage) and extension of opening hours in schools have also been high on the agenda. Since 2006, all primary schools have to stay open for 8 hours, until 5.30 p.m. (formerly 3.30 p.m.), and to provide care before and after opening hours for working parents with caring needs. Major developments in the leave scheme have also been announced (see answer to question 3.). According to a new governmental proposal (May 2008), paid paternity leave taken during the first month after birth will be increased to 20 working days and the "initial parental leave" (formerly called "maternity leave") will be increased to 5 months with full compensation (or 6 months at 83%) on condition that the father takes one whole month (alone) of the leave; partial compensation (25% of average earnings) has also been proposed for the three months of parental leave (to be taken immediately after the end of the initial parental leave). In other words, the move toward the extension of paid leave has been linked to the principle of more gender sharing of leave.

If we try to summarize developments in "reconciliation" policies in Portugal, it is important to underline the following trends. Over the last three decades the basic framework of public response to the challenges posed by full-time work and family life has consistently stressed short fully-compensated leaves complemented by a system of publicly subsidized services to care for young children and by a variety of partially compensated, irregular (and gender-neutral) entitlements to miss work (30 days per family per

Council of Europe Family Policy Database

www.coe.int/familypolicy/database



year to care for sick children, 2-hour reduction in work during the first year of the child's life). Two main policy perspectives have underpinned this "early return to full-time work" gender-equality-orientated reconciliation policy model: first, the endorsement of a full-time dual earner model and of gender equity in employment and in society (a perspective which is largely sustained by social norms and practices, i.e. by Portuguese women's massive entry into employment from the 1960s onwards); secondly, the endorsement of a connection between leave policy and the expansion of state-subsidized low cost service provision for young children. A third perspective, related to the endorsement of gender equity in caring and the need for fathers' increased involvement in leave to care, has also been emphasized, but it is more recent (dating from the mid-nineties) and still less firmly anchored in dominant social norms and practices (Crompton, Lyonette and Wall, 2007).

In Portugal, the political context after 1974 seems to be an important factor to explain the common endorsement, over time, of the above-mentioned perspectives: three main parties (PC, PS and PSD, and in particular the last two), who have been alternately in power for the last 25 years) have built up a fairly strong consensus regarding the linkage between conciliation policy and gender equality policy as well as a shared vision of the importance of publicly-subsidized services to support families; they also share a vision of the State's role in shouldering the costs of leaves in order to make them effective. This relative consensus in the politics of reconciliation policy, also associated with policies carried out at a national level (rather than a regional level), has made for considerable continuity regarding the politics of reconciliation. In spite of this continuity, however, we can see that the implementation of the reconciliation policy model has not been easy to put into practice. Budgetary constraints, the slow expansion of services, the need to provide other types of support for low income families (such as cash benefits), and economic contexts in which the large majority of families need affordable non-profit services, all these factors have made for a reconciliation policy model which has been built up slowly even if quite coherently.

Romania

The developing integrated family policies based on respecting the superior interest of family and children are supported by the political parties. This support is reflected in an important legislative corpus voted by the Romanian Parliament.

Russian Federation

There have been no crucial changes in the profile of family policy over the last decade.

At the same time:

- In that period the creation of the social service system for the family and children has been fulfilled. The earliest institutions of that type have been created only in 1993. Today, a broad network of functions to provide personal help to families in diverse family problems, among them in complicated life circumstances.
- Economic growth in Russia has allowed to allocate sufficiently more resources for the needs of the family policy.
- New instruments for the family policy are developed and implemented. Along with conventional measures (like allowances, benefits, taxation policy and so on) since 2007 the program of "Maternity Capital" is realised, which is a completely new type of family policies. Since 2007 each woman giving birth or adopting second (or further) child can apply for the "Maternity Capital", a monetary sum, which is available for her after three years and can be invested in additional education for children, or in improving living conditions, or in additional pension for the mother. At the start of the program (January, 1st 2007) the amount of the "Maternity Capital" was 250 thousand roubles (about 7000 Euro). As long as the program is planned for a long-term period, the amount of the "Maternity Capital" should be indexed.

As for political parties formulating their position on family policies, in the last decade the major initiatives of almost all political parties represented in the Russian parliament dealt with raising allowances and providing other economic support to the family (e.g. proposals to pay wages to mothers to remunerate the labour spent to upbringing of children).

Now much attention is paid to the necessity of reforming legal basis of alimony payments for children, first of all to set the minimal alimony amount and to tighten the liability to pay alimonies. Nevertheless, a coordinated position has not been developed yet.

Serbia

Significant shift in the family policy are reflected in the measures focused to promotion of the position of family and children contained in the strategic papers (Pronatalist Strategy, National Action Plan for Children, Social Welfare Development Strategy, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper) and laws as well as implementation of defined activities, especially in the area of direct financial support for families, employment, housing and healthcare. The issues of the improvement of the situation of the families contained in the mentioned papers have been the subjects of public hearings as well as of views of different individuals, NGOs and experts in relation to tax incentives for baby apparels and equipment, which has not been established as a measure in favour of Pronatalist policy. In connection to the gender equality the hearings were held on the issues of greater role of women in public life, influence of women in decision making process, fight against violence over women, etc. Political parties generally support the concept of the development of family policy in Serbia. However, there are still practical examples where attitudes and regulations have not been put into practice (number of women sitting in the National Parliament).

Slovakia

In 2004, the Government of the SR acceded to the update of the State Family Policy Concept adopted in 1996. Considering the extensive changes that have been running in society during the last decade, the state family policy was particularly updated as regards the policies concerning employment, education, housing and legal protection of family members. The basic priorities of implementation of the family policy came to be the improvement of access to education, accessibility of housing, harmonization of work and family life, legal protection of family and assistance in crisis situations. The purpose of measures taken in relation to the implementation of family policy was particularly to support education and employment and to strengthen social cohesion. In compliance with the Lisbon strategy, the key measures in the area of education were directed towards the achievement of quality education for every child regardless of its family and socio-economic environment and the creation of an integrated life-long education market; the key measures in the area of housing through housing policy were directed towards the support of mobility, pro-family oriented policy and access to housing of low-income families; the key measures in the area of social policy were particularly directed towards the coordination of social protection and employment policy. In 2006, the current Government of the SR referred to the previously adopted strategic objectives of the state family policy and the measures adopted for its implementation and paid significant attention towards young families, reduction of the risk of poverty of families with children, development of social services in favour of families with children, elimination and prevention of various forms of violence occurring in families, socio-legal protection and creation of conditions for work opportunities for parents of minor children.

Slovenia

With the Programme for Children and Youth 2006-2016 a new chapter on family policy was prepared/adopted aiming to create such conditions for family life that enable young couples to create a family as well as remain active and fulfil their family, vocational and social roles. The state should create conditions for a quality life of all family members and facilitate the decision on having another child, adopt all the necessary measures to protect vulnerable family members in cases of family violence and ensure the necessary means and human resources in order to carry out supportive family programmes. In order to create Conditions for family life the following strategies are proposed:

- To improve the competitiveness of parents (especially mothers) and young women on the labour market.
- To guarantee conditions for a more seamless coexistence of professional and family lives.
- To guarantee a large number of non-profit apartments with municipal residential programmes and in partnership with Housing Fund of the Republic of Slovenia.
- To continue with financial stimulations (grants) for young families that need to solve their housing issue through a purchase or construction of an apartment, in line with the National Housing Saving Scheme Act.
- To introduce new or use the already existing obligatory or optional child education programmes and within them stress education, raise awareness and surpass stereotypes regarding traditional family roles in the family and society as a whole. To ensure a larger stress on family values.

Council of Europe Family Policy Database

www.coe.int/familypolicy/database



The Adoption of the Necessary Measures to Protect Vulnerable Members in Cases of Violence in the Family includes the following strategies:

- To adopt national guidelines on preventing violence in the family.
- To continue with public calls for tenders and co-fund programmes of non-governmental organisations that deal with violence (psychosocial aid for victims and perpetrators, preventive programmes to reduce violence in primary and secondary schools).
- To increase the severity of sanctions for those who violate a child's integrity.

The last objective Continuous Implementation of Family Support Programmes includes the following strategies:

- To guarantee a greater and easier accessibility to various services for all members of the family and allow a larger pluralisation of services, including through private initiatives.
- To facilitate educational programmes (pre-marriage counselling, baby-counselling, family crisis counselling, etc.).
- To ensure a greater inclusion of experts with individual/special knowledge to counsel families in crisis regarding alienation between partners, alcoholism, use of illegal drugs, training parents to live with a child with special needs, etc.
- To ensure additional and special education of doctors regarding psychosocial issues of children and youth (monitoring mental and physical development of school children).
- To ensure a continuing variety of social services for preschool kids and in basic caretaking and social care programmes, by combining the public, private and volunteer sectors, while also ensuring a better national coverage.
- To ensure a larger level of professional mobile individual help at home to families with children and youth with special needs. The special needs should be taken into account in recognizing a higher degree of financial and service-based help that stems from a specific position of children with special needs and their families.

Spain

Profound changes have taken place during the past decade in the field of family policy, essentially related to different family models and their new legal position. In this line, the Civil Code has been modified to grant equal treatment to couples of same sex including the same rights to get married and to adopt as hetero-sexual couples have.

An ageing society as the Spanish society requires new answers to deal with the challenge of care for the dependent members of families. For this reason, a new National Attention System for Dependent People has been established, to be developed in the coming years, so that families may be released from their mainly unique responsibility of caring for the disabled or aged members.

- It also has been one of the main goals to increase the resources to be able to offer quality education services for children up to three years of age.
 - Same sex marriage has been controversial. The policy was promoted by the Socialist political party in the Government and rejected by the centre-right Popular Party (PP). The PP challenged the legislation in the Constitutional Court.
- Where there is a general agreement among all the political parties is on the need of promoting new services to care for dependents and also to increase child care services.

Sweden

The new Government took office in October 2006. During the election campaign, the four Alliance parties (the right and centre-right parties now forming the Government) made an agreement on a family policy reform, where the central points of departure were the introduction of a municipal child-raising allowance, a gender equality bonus, a childcare voucher system and greater educational content in preschool. In 2008, the Government has presented proposals to the Riksdag on the child-raising allowance and the gender equality bonus. Work on the childcare voucher system and greater educational content in preschool is underway and will be presented later in 2008/09.

Switzerland

Le Gouvernement s'est toujours prononcé pour une politique active en faveur de la famille, ayant pour but de permettre aux personnes qui désirent des enfants de les accueillir dans les meilleures conditions possibles et soutenir les parents tout au long de l'éducation de leurs enfants. Une meilleure conciliation de la vie professionnelle et familiale, de même qu'une amélioration de la situation économique des familles, font toutefois l'objet d'une attention accrue depuis une décennie.

L'introduction d'un véritable congé maternité au niveau fédéral, ainsi que l'introduction d'une loi fédérale harmonisant les réglementations cantonales d'allocations familiales, ont donné matière à débat. Ces deux projets de loi ont été l'objet d'un référendum, ce qui a conduit à deux votations populaires (la première en 2004 et la seconde en 2006). Ces dernières se sont soldées par l'acceptation par le peuple des objets soumis au vote. Dans les deux cas, les partis de droite étaient plutôt opposés à ces projets, le centre droit était divisé, alors que le centre gauche et la gauche y étaient plutôt favorables.

En revanche, la loi fédérale sur les aides financières à l'accueil extra-familial pour enfants (cf. supra iii) a été rapidement adoptée par le Parlement (le 4.10.2002), puis mise en œuvre (dès le 1.2.2003), en raison du consensus politique autour de ce projet (seule une partie de la droite y était opposée). Quant aux articles constitutionnels sur l'éducation (cf. supra iii), ils ont été plébiscités par le peuple (21.5.2006) en recueillant plus de 85% de votes positifs.

Turkey

The increasing need for family support services related to urbanization is one of the major elements altering the profile of family policy. Different political parties have consensus for presenting these services.

Ukraine

The Resolution of Government about a considerable increase in the benefit with the generation of children was accepted since January 1;
The State Programme for Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities until 2010 realizes in Ukraine;
Some special state's programmes for children realize now in Ukraine.

United Kingdom

Under the Labour government, there has been an increased focus on improving children's wellbeing by providing support to parents. There is a growing consensus between the political parties on the need to provide parenting support. There is some division over the issue of providing financial incentives for marriage. The Government's position is that all children should have equal support entitlements regardless of the marital status of those parents.