

STATEMENTS–DISCUSSIONS



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FAMILY POLICY MODELS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

ABSTRACT

The practice of many European Union countries shows that family policy can be served not only as an instrument to support people raising their children or coping with the consequences of demographic crisis, but also as an efficient tool to introduce gender equality and provide an answer to the economic challenges of the modern world. It is a systematic activity guided by the pragmatic goal of investing in the development of society as a whole and building social capital. This kind of activity should be an indispensable element of adjusting to globalization processes. Family policy should be consistent with the aims and aspirations of diverse family models within any given society and encompass transformations of a new model of family, which becomes often a form of different partner relationships.

Key words:

family policy, welfare models, social policy models, European Union

1. Introduction

The practice of many European Union countries shows that family policy can be served not only as an instrument of support for people raising their children or coping with the consequences of demographic crisis, but also as an efficient tool

to introduce gender equality and provide an answer to the economic challenges of the modern world. It is a systematic activity guided by the pragmatic goal of investing in the development of society as a whole and building social capital. This kind of activity should be an indispensable element of adjusting to globalization processes. Family policy should be consistent with the aims and aspirations of diverse family models within any given society and encompass transformations of a new model of family, which often becomes a form of different partner relationships.

The aim of the article is to show the instruments that are applied by the member state of the European Union, used in family policy in the face of demographic trends. In presenting article unusually important are also the elements of direct family policy as a support for families acting in 5 different models of family policy in the UE. The authors would like to get the answer on question if more or less effectively realized family policy in the EU can improve the demographic situation.

2. Genesis of the European Union

Various forms of assistance to the weak and those unable to cope with economic problems, such as state intervention in the process of the formation of the social order, have developed in the course of history of individual states and Europe at large. As early as 1957, the Treaty creating the EEC also established the principle of harmonization of the EEC member states' social systems. The intention behind the EEC Treaty was also to gradually abolish barriers and restrictions hindering the mobility of labor, and to establish a common, supranational social policy in the future. The EEC founding members – Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands – had been evolving along similar lines and had similar systems of social protection for their nationals, referred to as “Continental” at that time¹. The model was based on corporatist arrangements in the area of social policy, and an income-related distribution of welfare resources. This is not to say that these countries had a uniform social policy, though the assumption was made that the minimum social standards would, in the future, be made uniform across the Community. At the initial stage of economic integration, however, each state had a different decision-making system and a different way of addressing social needs. The admission of new members into the EEC – Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom in 1973, and Greece, Spain and Portugal in the 1980s – ruined the chances of a speedy harmonization of social security systems since the

¹ L. Hantrais, *Social Policy in the European Union*, London 1995, p. 19.

newly admitted states had had quite distinct social traditions, ranging from the British liberal, through the Scandinavian to the Mediterranean (or Latin) system. The existing differences in the ways of addressing and resolving social issues were thereby revealed. Moreover, the Community did not push for the launching of a social union. This was supposed to be the final stage of full integration; accordingly, the attention was focused primarily on economic aspects and the launching of the monetary union. However, the implementation, as of 1 January 1993, of the principle of free movement for all EU nationals across the EU posed new social challenges and created the need to quickly harmonize and standardize the minimum social standards and values.

While drawing up a typology of various social and family policy models², one takes into consideration the terms of access to benefits and services, a selective versus universal character of social protection, the quality and standards of benefits and services offered, the scope and objectives of the labor market policy (the right to employment or the right to a benefit), the role of the public authorities in providing for the citizens' basic needs, the methods of funding of social security programs.

2.1. Demographic trends in the European Union

The basic social-demographic problem in Europe is a long-term decline in the number of births. It causes two phenomena that pose various challenges to the public:

- fall in population (number of deaths exceeds the number of births,
- in a situation of negative international migration balance) and
- increase in the proportion of old people among all the inhabitants that is demographic aging.

The population in EU countries is the result of long-term population growth. In recent years, it is observed that this increase is getting smaller. This results in a low birth rate, accompanied by a steady gradual increase in life expectancy. Sudden changes in fertility or increase the annual migration will not change the fact of negative growth – if these values would be constant, would become a one-off effect and that it gave little to make structural changes in the population³.

² The term “typology of welfare states” is frequently used in the technical literature, with the terms “welfare state” and “social policy” being used interchangeably.

³ E. Frątczak, J. Balicki, C.B. Nam, *Przemiany ludnościowe, fakty-interpretacje-opinie* [Facts – Interpretations – Opinions], Warszawa 2007, p. 225.

Social and economic changes associated with aging of the population are large implications for many EU countries – these are among other consequences that affect school-age population, changes in family structures, changes in health care, social protection, social security and public finances.

On the 1 January 2007, the membership of European Union stood at 27 countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom.

These 27 European countries had a total population of 497.4 million.

There are 4 EU member states with a population greater than 50 million: Germany (82.2), the United Kingdom (61.2), France (63.3), and Italy (59.6).

The combined population of these 4 states represents nearly two-thirds of the total population of the EU.

From the second side, there are states with a population of less than 10 million: Luxembourg (less than half million), Ireland (4.4), Finland (5.3), Denmark (5.5), Sweden (9.2), Austria (8.3), Bulgaria (7.6), Estonia (1.3), Cyprus (0.8), Latvia (2.3), Lithuania (3.4), Malta (0.4), Slovenia (2.0), and Slovakia (2.4).

Populations between 10 and 50 million can be found in Spain (45.3), Netherlands (16.4), Greece (11.2) and Belgium (10.7), Czech Republic (10.4), Hungary (10.0), Poland (38.1), Portugal (10.6), and Romania (21.5).

2.2. Population by sex and age

The population structure can also be studied in terms of sex. The masculinity ratio at birth (on average 105 boys are born per 100 girls) means that in most states there are slightly more men than women from birth until about the age of 55. After this, as a result of higher male mortality, women become more numerous than men and the gap widens with age.

On 1 January 2008, more than 208 million women were living in the European Union, representing 51.2% of the total population. They account for 50.2% of the population in Ireland, which has the lowest percentage of women, and 51.8% of the population in Portugal, respectively, which has the highest percentage of women.

There are the three main age groups that make up the total population: 0–18 (children), 19–65 (this is population at working age), and 65 years or older (population at non-working age).

Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, and Italy have the oldest population while Ireland has the youngest. Denmark is also the only European country in which there are more people over 65 years than people under 18 years. In Ireland, 33.5% of the total population is under 18 years. By contrast the proportion of under-18-year-olds stood at around 20% in Germany, 17.3% and Portugal, 16.7% in Greece, and 18.9 in Finland. Less than 12% of the population in Ireland was over 65 years of age.

The state with the highest proportion of foreign residents is Luxembourg (33.4%). In this state, more than 80% of foreigners possess European Union nationality. They are mostly Spanish, Portuguese, French, or German.

In most European states, the proportion of foreigners is relatively low at less than 5%. There are 5 states in which foreigners are between 5% and 10% of the population. These states are Germany, Austria, Belgium, France, and Sweden. In these countries, the majority of foreign nationals are Eastern or Central European or they come from Asia or Africa. In Germany, the main foreign community is Turkish, which constitutes some 30% of the foreign population.

The institution of the family has undergone major upheavals in recent years throughout Europe. The decline in the number of marriages, the rise in divorces, and the increase of consensual unions are the most striking features of the marriage rate.

In most states, this rate is lower than 6‰ (per mil). The marriage rate is falling for all ages. These developments have led to two major changes. On the one hand, there has been a constant rise in the mean age of women at first marriage. In many states, the mean age at the time of a woman's first wedding is between 28 and 32 years of age; it is highest in the countries of northern Europe (Denmark – 30.5, Sweden – 30, Lichtenstein – 32) and lowest in southern Europe (Bulgaria – 23).

An increase in the crude divorce rate is observed throughout Europe. The crude divorce rate has risen in many western and northern European countries (France, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Latvia, Lithuania, Belgium, Czech Republic, and Estonia). It is lowest in southern Europe (Greece, Spain, Italy, and Slovenia). There isn't divorce in Ireland. At present, a third to a half of all marriages end in divorce in many European countries.

The overall change in a population is a combination of "natural movement". The difference between the number of births and deaths and "net migration", resulting from population exchanges with the outside.

There are 13 member states of EU where the overall population growth rate is positive. Germany and Italy are the only EU countries where the number of deaths exceeds the number of births. The natural growth rate has been negative in Ger-

many since the beginning of the 90s and in Italy since 1993. In Germany, the natural deficit increased between 1992 and 1995, but the population of these two states continues to grow because of immigration. Spain, Greece, and Portugal, which used to be emigrant countries, now form part of the latter group. In Greece and Sweden, growth resulting from natural increase has been practically nil since 1993.

In many European countries, the generations born after 1945 have not had enough children to replace themselves. This lifetime fertility rate has been declining with the most recent generations.

European women are having their first child and their children in general at a later and later age. In the EU countries, the mean age at childbirth was higher than 29 years of age.

Denmark, Sweden, and France have the highest numbers of births out of wedlock at 59.02% in Estonia, 54.74% in Sweden, 52.78% in Slovenia, 52.56% in France, 51.08% in Bulgaria, 46.16% in Denmark, 45.52% in United Kingdom, 43.14% in Latvia, and 41.24% in Netherlands. They were least frequent in Greece -5.93%. The proportion of births out of wedlock has increased over recent years throughout Europe.

Fertility measures the number of children that a woman would have if, at the average age, she matched the currently recorded fertility rates. Lifetime fertility shows this. It is generally considered that generation replacement has been achieved when the fertility rate is at 2.1 children or higher per woman.

The total fertility rate (TFR) was highest in Ireland (2.01). Nine European countries have TFRs between 1.50 and 2.0. These countries are France (1.98), United Kingdom (1.9), Sweden (1.88), Denmark (1.84), Finland (1.83), Netherlands (1.72), Estonia (1.63), Luxembourg (1.61), and Belgium (1.58). The lowest levels were recorded in Slovakia (1.25), Romania (1.30), Poland (1.31), Hungary (1.32), and Portugal (1.33). Generally speaking, TFRs are falling throughout Europe. However, there has been a slight upturn over the last two years in many states, including Germany, Austria, France, Luxembourg, and Portugal.

The infant mortality rate is an indicator of a country's health and social conditions. The infant mortality rate is the number of deaths occurring before the age of one year per thousand live births. It is highest in Romania and lowest in Luxembourg, which had an infant mortality rate of 1.8 in 2008. In the same year, it was 2.1 in Slovenia, 2.5 in Sweden, 2.6 Finland, and 2.8. In Czech Republic. Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Netherlands, Austria, and Portugal had infant mortality rates between 3 and 4 per 1000 infants. In Bulgaria, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and United Kingdom, those rates were between 5 and 10.

Table 1. The demographic situation in the European Union – 2008

Country	Total population (in mln)	0 to 14 years (%)	15 to 24 years (%)	25 to 49 years (%)	50 to 64 years (%)	65 to 79 years (%)	80 years and more (%)	Foreigners	Net migration
Belgium	10.7	16.9	12.1	35.1	18.8	12.4	4.7	971,448	64.3
Bulgaria	7.6	13.4	13.1	35.7	20.5	13.7	3.6	24,402	-0.9
Czech Republic	10.4	14.2	13.0	37.0	21.2	11.2	3.4	347,649	71.8
Denmark	5.5	18.4	11.7	34.4	19.9	11.5	4.1	298,450	28.9
Germany	82.2	13.7	11.6	36.0	18.6	15.3	4.6	7,255,395	-53.6
Estonia	1.3	14.8	15.2	34.8	18.0	13.5	3.7	229,300	0.1
Ireland	4.4	20.6	14.1	38.9	15.5	8.2	2.7	553,690	17.9
Greece	11.2	14.3	11.2	37.6	18.3	14.6	4.1	906,400	35.0
Spain	45.3	14.6	11.2	40.6	16.9	12.0	4.6	5,262,095	413.8
France	63.8	18.5	12.8	33.7	18.6	11.5	4.9	3,674,000	77.0
Italy	59.6	14.0	10.2	37.2	18.6	14.6	5.5	3,432,651	437.9
Cyprus	0.8	17.4	15.4	37.4	17.3	9.7	2.8	125,300	0.6
Latvia	2.3	13.8	15.6	35.7	17.8	13.7	3.5	415,493	-2.5
Lithuania	3.4	15.4	15.9	36.1	16.8	12.6	3.3	42,934	-7.7
Luxembourg	0.5	18.2	11.8	38.7	17.3	10.6	3.4	205,889	7.7
Hungary	10.0	15.0	12.7	35.7	20.4	12.5	3.7	176,580	16.6
Malta	0.4	16.2	14.1	34.5	21.3	10.7	2.8	15,460	2.5
Netherlands	16.4	17.9	12.1	35.6	19.7	11.0	3.8	688,375	31.5
Austria	8.3	15.4	12.3	37.4	17.8	12.6	4.6	835,182	34.0
Poland	38.1	15.5	15.5	36.0	19.6	10.5	3.0	57,842	-14.9
Portugal	10.6	15.3	11.6	37.4	18.2	13.2	2.5	446,333	9.4
Romania	21.5	15.2	14.6	37.0	18.2	12.1	2.8	26,100	1.3
Slovenia	2.0	13.9	12.2	37.6	19.9	12.7	3.6	68,621	19.5
Slovakia	5.4	15.8	15.3	38.1	18.8	9.4	2.6	40,904	7.1
Finland	5.3	16.9	12.4	32.7	21.5	12.2	4.3	132,708	15.4
Sweden	9.2	16.8	13.0	33.0	19.6	12.2	5.3	524,488	55.6
United Kingdom	61.2	17.6	13.4	34.9	18.0	11.6	4.5	4,020,800	226.4

Source: Eurostat Yearbook 2010.

Table 2. The demographic situation in the European Union – 2008

Country	Marriages (per 1000 persons)	Divorces (per 1000 persons)	Natural in- crease	Number of Live Births (1000)	Births out of wedlock (%)	Fertility rate	Infant mortal- ity (per 1000 live births)	Death (1000)	Life expectancy at birth (Males)	Life expect- ancy at birth (Females)
Belgium	4.4	2.8	0.19	125.0	:	:	3.4	102.1	77.1	82.6
Bulgaria	3.6	1.9	-0.61	77.7	51.08	1.42	8.6	108.2	69.5	76.7
Czech Republic	5.0	3.0	-0.01	119.6	36.34	1.44	2.8	105.5	73.8	80.2
Denmark	6.8	2.7	0.20	65.0	46.16	1.84	4.0	54.3	76.2	80.6
Germany	4.6	2.3	-0.21	682.5	32.07	1.37	3.5	842.1	77.4	82.7
Estonia	4.6	2.6	-0.24	16.0	59.02	1.63	5.0	17.1	67.2	78.8
Ireland	:	:	1.13	74.8	33.42	2.01	3.1	27.3	77.4	82.1
Greece	4.6	:	0.03	115.5	5.93	1.41	3.5	104.1	77.1	81.8
Spain	:	:	0.28	518.9	33.15	1.40	3.5	395.6	77.8	84.3
France	4.3	:	0.54	835.0	52.56	1.98	3.7	534.3	77.6	84.8
Italy	4.1	0.9	-0.03	575.8	18.86	1.37	3.7	586.7	:	:
Cyprus	:	:	0.55	9.2	8.88	1.39	5.3	5.2	77.8	82.2
Latvia	5.7	2.7	-0.54	23.9	43.14	1.41	6.7	31.6	65.8	76.5
Lithuania	7.2	3.1	-0.41	35.1	28.55	1.35	4.9	44.2	64.9	77.2
Luxembourg	3.9	2.0	0.46	5.6	30.16	1.61	1.8	3.4	76.7	82.2
Hungary	4.0	2.5	-0.43	99.2	39.47	1.32	5.6	130.0	69.4	77.8
Malta	6.0	-	0.24	4.1	25.40	1.37	9.9	3.2	77.5	82.2
Netherlands	4.6	2.0	0.39	184.7	41.24	1.72	3.8	134.5	78.1	82.5
Austria	4.2	:	0.04	77.8	38.85	1.38	3.7	73.1	77.5	83.1
Poland	6.8	1.7	0.01	414.5	19.86	1.31	5.6	382.0	71.0	79.8
Portugal	4.1	:	0.03	104.6	36.19	1.33	3.3	102.6	75.9	82.2
Romania	7.0	1.7	-0.23	221.9	27.44	1.30	11.0	255.9	69.7	76.9
Slovenia	3.1	1.1	0.01	21.2	52.78	1.38	2.1	18.6	74.7	82.0
Slovakia	5.2	2.3	0.03	57.4	30.14	1.25	5.9	52.9	70.6	78.4
Finland	5.8	2.5	0.22	59.5	40.74	1.83	2.6	49.0	76.0	83.1
Sweden	5.5	2.3	0.17	109.3	54.74	1.88	2.5	91.3	79.0	83.1
United Kingdom	:	:	0.32	794.4	45.42	1.90	4.7	573.7	77.6	81.8

Source: Eurostat Yearbook 2010.

The main indicator used to measure mortality is life expectancy at birth, which is calculated separately for men and women. It represents the average length of life for an individual matching the currently recorded mortality rates throughout life. For men, the life expectancy at birth is lower than 75. Sweden is the only country where the average life expectancy for men is 79. In Lithuania, the life expectancy for men is the lowest – 64.9.

Life expectancy at birth for women is highest in France (84.8) and lowest in Latvia (76.5), Bulgaria (76.7), and Romania (76.9). However, it is over 80 for women in 18 countries: Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Greece, Sweden, Finland, Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Spain, Cyprus, Luxemburg, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Life expectancy for women is higher than for men in every European Union country and the difference is 10.6 years. In general, countries with similar life expectancies at birth for men and women are those with the highest levels.

Alongside a low fertility rate, life expectancy at birth continues to increase. The marriage rate is declining while the divorce rate is rising and the proportion of marriages out of wedlock is increasing. As a result of the stagnation in the rate of natural increase, migration plays an ever-increasing role in the overall development of populations. The aging of populations is also a major problem that is already being felt in some western and Southern European countries.

Therefore, an extremely important in shaping the demographic policy is the role of the states, within which the family policy is located. This is primarily to conduct such a demographic policy which will at least provide a simple reproduction of the population. Without an active demographic policy threatens EU countries the systematic loss of population and the deterioration of the structure of her age.

3. Models of family policy in the EU

Welfare states in general can be divided into five main categories⁴: liberal, southern, social democratic, continental, and conservative models regarding the role of the family. Family model is based on equality of the pro-family and professional orientation in the public consciousness. Family plays an important role for the younger generation, however, work and career hold a high position in the hierar-

⁴ G. Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Cambridge 1990, p. 4.

chy of values, but they are not fully “competitive” values. The family is mostly seen as an institution, which is based on the agreement between two independent economic partners. Partnership in providing economic bases of existence to family does not lead to the equal sharing of duties. Women carry out most of the work related to household and childcare, but that has changed.

3.1. Liberal model

In the liberal model, welfare-type benefits, modest universal transfers, or moderate social insurance schemes prevail. Individuals with low incomes, generally employees, are basically eligible for benefits. In this model, social reforms are seriously restricted by the traditional, liberal work ethos. The point is that welfare benefits should not substitute for gainful employment as the main support. The rates of benefits are generally moderate, eligibility is limited, and drawing a benefit lowers the recipient’s social status. In the model under discussion, the state stimulates the private market both passively, by guaranteeing only the minimum income level, and actively, by subsidizing private benefit schemes. In this model, access to social welfare benefits is minimized by limiting the scope of welfare entitlements and by the emergence of specific social divisions, characterized by a relative equality of poverty among benefit recipients, marked differences in wealth within the society, and a distinct political and class division into those relying on state assistance and the remainder of the population.

The liberal approach postulates that the tax system remains neutral vis-à-vis the taxpayer’s alimony obligations (your children, your expenses). The liberal concept takes neither the taxpayer’s family status nor his taxpaying ability into account. Everyone pays according to his income, rather than to his individual taxpaying ability. The burdens resulting from the taxpayer’s family status are not taken into consideration since families raising bigger numbers of children, as beneficiaries of social services and benefits, receive a greater share in the distribution of the national income than families with few children or childless ones. Liberal concepts oppose any tax deductions or tax benefits related to family burdens and obligations, as any such burden on individual income reduces the taxpayer’s freedom to handle his own income. As a last resort, they concede to the payment of benefits to some marginal groups, identified under arbitrary criteria for the provision of assistance. According to liberal concepts, part of the income in order to be rationally invested, must be taken away. In the liberal approach, the income taken away from a family is to be supplemented by economic effects of free enterprise. Only

a growing economy may raise the living standards of all citizens (the higher the national income, the higher the living standards of all citizens)⁵.

The underlying assumption of the liberal approach is that the free market plays the key role in providing for human needs. According to advocates of this regime, social problems result mainly from individual causes, and the principal task of social policy is to alleviate poverty.

In the Anglo-Saxon model, the family is regarded as the foundation of education for generations, as those are the children, who are perceived as the most important value. In comparison to other countries, it can be seen that the birth of illegitimate child in the Anglo-Saxon countries are rare, however, it a rise in such instances has been observed. The tendency to enter into marriage is decreasing due to a desire for better career development by the youth. In this respect, the dynamic increase in female participation in the economy has become very noticeable. The dominant factor of the family policy is the state, working to give families the best possible conditions for the development and needs.

The main instruments are providing cash benefits that support working families and, for those that are unemployed, for educating children (2 new benefits introduced by the State: Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit); professional activities for women; supporting single mothers; and providing educational and developmental activities for children. This model is followed in the UK.

3.2. The conservative-corporatist model

This social policy model essentially seeks to preserve the existing differences in social status that have evolved on the market. In countries following this model, the liberal obsession concerning the effectiveness of market mechanisms has never been too strong; hence the provision of social guarantees has not been seriously questioned. The public authorities have been ready to substitute for the market as a provider of certain benefits, hence the marginal significance of private insurance and benefits granted by the employer. This model affects income redistribution to a negligible degree. In the opinion of Esping-Andersen⁶, such regimes remain under a strong influence of the Church, hence a strong attachment to, and the preservation of traditional family values. Social insurance generally does not cover wives who do not work out of home, and family benefits encourage mother-

⁵ L. Hantrais, *Social Policy in the European Union*, London 1995, p. 19.

⁶ G. Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare...*, op.cit., p. 23.

hood. Childcare and other services targeting the family are intentionally underdeveloped, and the public authorities decide to intervene only when the family has exhausted its ability to help its members. The conservative approach advocates a traditional tax regime involving deductions for consumption per each person in the family from the assessable income. This concept of taxation takes the taxpayer's taxpaying ability into consideration above all else. In other words, taxation depends on taxpaying ability, i.e. the burdens on an individual taxpayer necessary to provide for his personal and his family's needs. Taxpayers with equal taxpaying abilities should be burdened to the same degree. The underlying assumption of the conservative approach is that the family is an independent and autonomous entity with specific rights and obligations vis-à-vis its members. Family obligations include the provision of means of subsistence to all its members, in particular to those incapable of securing such means through their own work or from their own resources (children, the elderly, the unemployed, the disabled, those burdened by the chores of motherhood, etc.). Public institutions should neither substitute for the family nor hinder it in performing the basic functions related to independent provision of means of subsistence to family members. In particular, public bodies should not take the family's income, necessary to provide for its elementary consumer needs, away from the family. The provision for the family's elementary needs should come first⁷. In this model, the family is considered as a basis for social cohesion and place of education for the younger generations.

The family is seen as a place for personal development of its members. That does not mean that the family is an institution based on a formal marriage. As the importance of having children increases, some trends appear which treat having children as a patriotic duty under the threat of imbalance in the mechanism of population reproduction.

The phenomenon of family breakdown increases through divorces. To a relatively lesser degree than in other countries, the average fertility rates have decreased in countries with conservative-corporatist models as women have become increasingly active economically.

The dominant subject of family policy is the state, acting directly or through social security institutions. The decentralization of the state power means that local authorities have an increased role in carrying out family policy. Non-governmental organizations representing the interests of families are involved in the debates about family policy and solutions to special issues, which are subject to social support. The main instrument of the family policy is universal social benefits. The

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 26.

benefits granted in special situations are less common, but their form and extent has shown growth in recent years. Money transfer systems used in family policy (for example, in France) have developed extensively and are based on different principles (universality, but also dependent on a family's income), which take into account the different situations and needs of families. Benefits paid for children are a universal family allowance. The amount of the benefit paid for the second child in the family is higher than the benefit paid for the first child.

This model is observed in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, and Finland. Some of its features can also be found in the French and Italian systems.

3.3. The social-democratic model

The social-democratic model is found in the countries where universal and unconditional social rights have been granted to the middle classes as well. The name of the model is derived from the domination of social-democratic parties in determining the shape of social reforms. Rather than tolerating a dualism between the state and the market and between the working class and the middle classes, social democrats have been building the welfare state intended to guarantee an equal right to high living standards. This involved increasing the rates and quality of social benefits and services to a level that would meet the middle class' demands, as well as the provision of social protection to workers on a scale so far enjoyed only by the more affluent social groups.

In the area of taxation, the social democratic approach⁸ advocates equal tax burdens on all, regardless of their taxpaying abilities. The amount of taxation depends on the taxpayer's income level. This concept is based on the assumption that with equal incomes, everyone pays equal taxes. Those in need of assistance are granted benefits according to the rules in force. The criteria for determining eligibility for benefits distributed by public bodies are subject to constant political bargaining.

As the name suggests, social democracy has been the dominant political force in developing this universalistic welfare state that pervades all aspects of people's lives. It is within this system that the concept of social rights has been most fully

⁸ After: J. Hrynkiewicz, *Polityka społeczna wobec rodziny* [Social Policy towards the Family] [in:] *Prorodzinne rozwiązania w systemie podatkowym* [Pro-Family Provisions in the Tax System], The Proceedings of a conference organised by the Polish Parliamentary Family Committee, Warszawa 21 November 1998, p. 23.

realized, because the enjoyment of benefits and services is least dependent on a person's performance in the market and is, instead, commensurate to need.

The key role of the state is the characteristic feature of the social-democratic model of family policy. Public services and material transfers are fundamental instruments characteristic for the social-democratic type of welfare state. Instruments such as public services, welfare, and financial benefits are considered to be an aspect of the state intervention into family life.

Local governments carry much of the family policy out. They became the main subject of realizing and controlling the considerable parts of the family policies, although in many cases their action is supported by the central budget.

The basic instruments of this policy are welfare benefits and an extensive system of benefits in the form of services.

In conclusion, it should be said that the social-democratic model plays an important role as it provides a wide range of social benefits. This system is characterized by:

- General access to services based on the principle of universalism (this is due to the fact that everyone has the possibility of using them as a civil right);
- The functioning on the basis of public funds;
- Variety of services including such parts of child's life as health services, education, and child care (those services are provided in various forms);
- Actively involving parents in activities of educational institutions in a formalized or non-formal way (participation in the work for establishments);
- Supporting families with various difficulties or with special needs, such as families with disabled children (family and child counseling, child welfare services operating on a self-help basis, and family collaboration with professionals).

Social democrats advocate levying taxes on all and a distribution of social welfare benefits only to families in need. Public bodies will distribute the proportion of income taken away from families more fairly, which will allow them to better provide for their needs and ensure equal access to services and the national income. According to this approach, it is possible to equalize living standards by applying such rules of distribution that will guarantee an equal share of the national income for everybody. It is the responsibility of public bodies to fairly take away and fairly distribute the national income.

Advocates of this model regard the social and economic structure of a given society as the main source of social problems, and consider the "socialization" of distribution to be the way to resolve social problems. Social policy is to play the key role in this process; its task being to create a system whereby the needs of each

member of the community would be provided for at an adequate level thanks to the cooperation of all, based on the solidarity principle. This model is followed in Sweden, Denmark, as well as the Netherlands.

3.4. Southern Model (South European Model)

Since 1996⁹, there has been a suggestion to label the above “the South European” model, in view of the following patterns found:

- Specific distortions of guaranteed income schemes, i.e., on the one hand, high benefits for certain groups, and, on the other hand, a lack of benefits or low benefits for other groups;
- Partial universalism in health care;
- A low degree of state intervention in the area of social assistance and specific relations between public and non-public bodies in this area;
- Continuance of clientship and well-developed patronage systems in a selective distribution of cash benefits (such as disablement pensions);
- Weakness of state institutions;
- Consolidation of political parties as the main exponents of social interests;
- Ideological polarization.

The Southern European family model holds a high position in the hierarchy of values, which are influenced by religious norms. Children represent the most appreciated value. Intra-family relations are based on the traditional division of roles between women and men while the intergenerational relationship is based on commitments. This has its reflection in the formation and functioning processes of the family. The traditional, but also the dominant form of family is marriage.

A decline in the tendency to enter into marriage results in the increase of the population that will never be in such type of a relationship. The limited opportunity to marry does not increase the number of single-person households. Young people in Mediterranean countries will continue to live with their parents, who provide them with economic support, but without restricting individual freedom. In comparison with other countries, in southern countries, it is very uncommon that children are born out of wedlock.

The late introduction of the right to divorce as well as the rules during the divorce proceedings influences the patterns of family breakdown. There are an increasing number of single-parent families, although their total numbers are lower

⁹ N. Furniss, D. Tilton, *The Case for the Welfare State*, Blomington 1977, p. 15.

than in other Western European countries. The main producers of the family policy are local authorities. At the local level, childcare, health services, family and legal counseling, and special services for families are offered. In pursuing these objectives, non-profit organizations, and volunteers are involved.

A lot of family associations come into existence to represent their interests, although there are also various initiatives to organize free time for children, care, cafeterias, and leisure activities. An instrument of family policy in southern countries, which has a universal character, is a tax system in which credits are provided depending on the taxpayer's family situation. Benefits aimed at facilitating the reconciliation of professional and family responsibilities is the ability to use from maternity leave and childcare leave.

Summing up, the progressive development of social services – as an instrument of family policy supporting families in carrying out the educational functions – results in a compromise, which was achieved throughout many years of discussions and debates with various political groups of different ideological pedigree, creating a preferred model of the family. This model is followed in Portugal, Spain, Greece, Ireland, and, partially, in Italy.

3.5. Model of post-socialist

In this model, the family based on marriage has a long and established tradition. This is undoubtedly due to the influence of the Catholic religion, raising marriage to a sacrament, and therefore inseparable. Marriage and the family occupy a high position in the hierarchy of values. However, there are some changes in marriage patterns that involve deferring the decision over time. This phenomenon, which creates fewer children, carries serious negative consequences for the process of procreation with regards to the implementation of the family model. The dominant subject of family policy is the State, which acts in a direct way to give families the best possible conditions for the development and needs¹⁰.

The purpose of this model of family policy is to increase the protection of families in difficult situations. The dominant instrument, which is used in this model, are cash benefits, especially family allowances, which have been primarily directed to families with difficult material conditions. This model is based primarily on the protection of the poorest families, the selectivity of benefits, and equal rights for women and men to services in order to enhance the impact on demographic processes.

¹⁰ M. Księżopolski, *Modele polityki społecznej* [Models of Social Policy], Warszawa 1999, p.19.

Table 3. Family benefits in the UE

Country	Type of the system	Personal scope	The criteria for the granting of benefits	Benefits and their degree		Other benefits and allowances
				Family benefits	Childbirth allowance	
SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC MODEL						
Sweden	Universal system	Living in a country with one or more children. The children and at least one parent must stay in Sweden for at least 6 months.	Up to the age of 16; Over 16, if attending school.	104 euros per month for a child.		An additional benefit for families with 3 or more children: 29 euros a month; for 4: children 86 euros a month; for 5 and each subsequent child: 104 euros a month.
Denmark	Universal system	Citizens who are permanent residents and foreigners living in Denmark at least 1 year (3 years for the special allowance)	Children up to 18 years.	135 euros per month for children aged 0–3 years; 123 euros per month for children aged 3–7 years; 96 euros per month for children aged 7–18 years.		Allowance for children of single parents and retirees in the amount of 607 euros per year; 2,328 per year to the fatherless; 1,164 per year for the multiples; 750 euros per year for children aged 0–6 years; 4,846 euro for an adopted child (single supplement).
Finland	Universal system	Persons living in Finland with one or more children – the child's parents or guardians of a child.	Children up to 17 years.	90 euros per month for first child; 110,50 euros per month for the second child; 131 euros per month for the third child; 151,50 euros per month for the fourth child; 172 euros per month for the fifth child and all subsequent children.	Women, who are residing in Finland and are pregnant at least 154 days, shall receive payment from the child's birthday. The mother may choose between receiving a so-called "Layette" or the provision of funds in the amount of 140 euro	For single parents allowance of 36.60 euros per month allowance; child care at home at: 3,028 per year for each child under the age of 3; 606 per year for each additional child up to the age of 7 dependents at home.

Country	Type of the system	Personal scope	The criteria for the granting of benefits	Benefits and their degree		Other benefits and allowances
				Family benefits	Childbirth allowance	
South European Model						
Italy	Employee social security system	Employed and insured, people receiving unemployment benefits and social assistance with one or more children or other dependents	Spouse and other people under 18 years of age if they are dependent on the insured person, children under the age of 18, with no limit for disabled children	Depends on family income	Childbirth allowance for not working women is paid for the third and each subsequent child in the amount of EUR 775 for each child. Women working temporarily receive an allowance of 1,549 euros and the third child. Adopted child allowance is 775 euros.	
Spain	Employee social security system	All workers, extracting and pensions from social insurance and people receiving sickness benefit, which have 1 or more children entitled to benefits, as well as adoptive mothers and fathers of abandoned children.	Children under the age of 18 years, without age limit of children with disabilities (with disability of at least 65%).	24,25 per month for able-bodied children under 18 years of age, 48,47 per month for a disabled child under 18 years of age, 301,55 euros for a child at least 65% of the disabled over 18 years of age, 452,33 euros for a child at least 75% disability over 18 years of age.	The allowance of childbirth in the amount of 451 euros is paid to the third and each subsequent child.	

Country	Type of the system	Personal scope	The criteria for the granting of benefits	Benefits and their degree		Other benefits and allowances
				Family benefits	Childbirth allowance	
Portugal	Employee social security system	All insured employees	A child under the age of 16 years, a child under the age of 24 years when studying, no age limit for disabled children	The amount of family allowance is determined individually, depending on family income and number of children in the family.	Birth allowance in the amount of 121,96 euros for each birth	Infant care allowance of € 22,45 per month
Greece	Employee social security system	All employment, not receiving benefits from employer	Children under 18 years, studying children under the age of 22, children with disabilities with no age limit.	5,87 euros per month for one child, 18 euros per month for two children 40 euro per month for three children 48 euro per month for four children, 8,07 euros for each additional child		

Country	Type of the system	Personal scope	The criteria for the granting of benefits	Benefits and their degree		Other benefits and allowances
				Family benefits	Childbirth allowance	
Conservative-corporatist model (CONTINENTAL)						
France	Universal system	All residents	Children under the age of 20 (income can not exceed 55% of the minimum wage)	107 euros per month for two children, 244 euro per month for three children 382 euros per month for four children, 519 euros per month for five children, 656 euros per month for six children. Each additional child is credited 137 per month.		Benefits for children under 3 years old, family allowances, housing allowance, benefits for single parents, child-raising allowance, provision of child care at home, an allowance for children with disabilities, to provide in connection with the start of the school year, the education allowance
Germany	Universal system	For people living in Germany that are taxable, and those who do not have other restrictions – for their children, adopted children and those who are still dependent	For children under the age of 18, children under the age of 21 if they are unemployed, children under the age of 27 years, if they are students, trainees, with no age limit for disabled children.	154 euros per month for first child, 154 euros per month for the second child, 154 euros per month for the third child, € 179 per month for the fourth and each subsequent.		Addition to family allowances, benefits to single parenthood, child-raising allowance

Country	Type of the system	Personal scope	The criteria for the granting of benefits	Benefits and their degree		Other benefits and allowances
				Family benefits	Childbirth allowance	
Belgium	Employee social security system	For working people – from the first child	For children under the age of 18 years, children with disabilities for 21 years or 25 years if they are students looking for full-time studies or work, and other children depend of insured	The first child: 77 euros a month for the second child: 129 euros per month the third and each additional child: 193 euros per month	In the first birth the allowance is 945 euros and for the second and each subsequent – 711 euro.	11,45 euros per month for children aged 6–12 years, 17,45 euros per month for children aged 12–18 years, 18,41 euros per month for children aged over 18 years, 295,86 euros per month (Appendix is increased depending on the degree of disability) for children with disabilities under the age of 21 years.

Country	Type of the system	Personal scope	The criteria for the granting of benefits	Benefits and their degree		Other benefits and allowances
				Family benefits	Childbirth allowance	
Holland	Universal system	Residents living below the 65 years of age in regardless of nationality and income, and everyone under 65 years of age working in the Netherlands, and thus those who pay income tax and are insured	Children under the age of 17 years, studying to the age of 24 years.	<p>For children born from 1 January 1995 the family allowances are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 54 per month over 5 years of age, 66 euro a month for children aged 6 to 11 years 78 euro per month for children aged from 12 to 17 years. <p>For children born before 1 January 1995 the basic allowance for children aged 12–17 years is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 78 euro for the first child, 88 euros for two children 91 euros for three children 99 euros for four children, 103 euros for five children, 106 euros for six children. 108 euros for seven children. 112 euro for eight children. 115 euro for nine children. 118 euros for ten children. <p>For children aged 6–11 years are paid allowances in an amount equal to 85% allowance</p>		For children with disabilities under 18 years are paid family allowances at double height. After completing 18 years benefit is entitled of an inability to work.

Country	Type of the system	Personal scope	The criteria for the granting of benefits	Benefits and their degree		Other benefits and allowances
				Family benefits	Childbirth allowance	
Austria	Universal system	Citizens permanently living in a country with 1 or more children and foreigners employed for at least 3 months, or if they stay for at least 5 consecutive years.	For children under the age of 19 years, children aged 18 and over and students, if reach the income subject to income tax of less than 8,721 euros a month, and children with disabilities – without any conditions.	For children under 10 years: 105 euros for the first child, 118 euros for the second child, 131 euros for the third and each subsequent. For children between 10 and 19 years of age: 124 euro for the first child, 136 euros for the second child, 149 euros for the third and each subsequent. On the day when the oldest child starts 19 years of age in the amount of the allowance is awarded: 145 euros for the first child, 158 euros for the second child, 171 euros for the third and each subsequent	Childbirth allowance is 566 euros and is payable in installments.	

Country	Type of the system	Personal scope	The criteria for the granting of benefits	Benefits and their degree		Other benefits and allowances
				Family benefits	Childbirth allowance	
Luxembourg	Universal system	All children residing in Luxembourg, regardless of family income	Child aged up to 18 years child aged up to 27 years if studying no age limit for children who become disabled before the age of 18 years.	140 euros per month for one child, 341 euros per month for two children, 637 euros per month for three children 296 euro per month for each additional child	Childbirth allowance amounts to 1,538 euros	Allowance for disabled children, an allowance for the start of the school year, the education allowance
LIBERAL MODEL						
Great Britain	Universal system	People living in a country with one or more children	To a child under the age of 16, a child under the age of 19 if studying in a full time.	103 euros per week for the eldest qualifying child, over 69 euros for each additional child in the family.	Childbirth allowance of 317 euros is paid for a born or adopted child after fulfilling the family income conditions, and upon showing of medical examinations	Maintenance payment, benefits for working families and for working families with low incomes
Ireland	Universal system	People living in a country with one or more children	A child under the age of 16 years, a child under the age of 19 years if a student or a disabled person.	54 euros per month for 1 st and 2 nd child 71 euros per month for 3 rd and each subsequent	The allowance is 635 euros per twin child, triplets or more children.	Allowance for single parent, allowances for children with disabilities

Country	Type of the system	Personal scope	The criteria for the granting of benefits	Benefits and their degree		Other benefits and allowances
				Family benefits	Childbirth allowance	
Post-socialist model						
Poland	Universal system	1) Polish citizens 2) Foreigners	18 years – At school, but no longer than 21 years of age, – 24 years of age, if she/he continues education at school or college and holds a decision on a moderate or severe disability.	11 euros per month for the first and second child, 14 euros per month for a third child, 17 euros per month for the fourth and each subsequent child	Single allowance on the birth in the amount of 280 euro per child.	Additions to the family allowance for childbirth and care, allowances during parental leave and to single parenthood, allowance of raising a child in a large family, allowance for education and rehabilitation of a disabled child, the addition of the child starting school away from home, allowance of the beginning of school year, maintenance support.

Source: Own work based on MISSOC 2006 – *Social Protection in the Member States of the European Union*, European Commission, Luxembourg 2006.

4. Conclusion

As seen above, there is no single family policy that can be observed in the European Union. However, the different characteristics of the models, or systems, are more or less prevalent in each country. Social policies implemented in the Member States of the European Union include the features of all models. Typically, policy execution towards members of a family is dependent on the commitment of the state. Based on the most distinctive characteristics, we can attribute a particular model to a certain country. The practical differences between the various types of welfare state can be identified when discussing their various social problems, their specific situations, and their methods of financing and resolving (or not solving) family and demographic problems.

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