This call for contributions is of interest to researchers in the fields of political science, law, economy, sociology and history as well as to other players involved in social welfare.

Contributions must be submitted before March 15, 2015

Research on what has become known as “Social Europe” has traditionally focused on assessing the content of the “Community acquis” from a social point of view - its goal, its scope of application and procedures. Within these limits, it essentially analysed the obstacles to the emergence of a fully developed social dimension within the framework of a broader European integration process.

The current Euro crisis has led us to rethink this approach from many angles. Clearly, both the crisis and the resulting measures provide valuable food for thought - how can the lessons learned from this crisis be used to deal with the “social question” posed at the national - and from now on – at the European level?

This situation calls for reassessment of previous analyses and examination of the lessons to be learned from these developments. For this issue we are therefore calling for contributions in response to three basic questions:

- How have the Euro crisis and its consequences led to a reconsideration of the limits and the obstacles to a Social Europe?
- How can we analyse the “new governance” and the social policies implemented to tackle the crisis?
- How can we analyse the responses of European institutions to the Euro crisis? Have any alternative viewpoints and/or fresh perspectives opened up?

**THEME 1: Stalemate in Social Europe – seen through the lens of the current crisis**

In order to understand how integration into Europe has impacted national social policymaking in the member states concerned, several angles of approach have been adopted:

- Researchers have explored the problematic relationship between the “supranational project” and the different Social states at the national level, each with their own historical background. Differences among social protection systems (due to these historical influences)
are pointed out, as well as the cultural dimension of these differences. Conversely, the lack of a shared political culture, a common language and a genuine public space (Öffentlichkeit) for exchange at the European Union level (EU) has played a key role in shaping the future and the limits of a Social Europe, even challenging its legitimacy. Have current developments and upheavals caused by the crisis reinforced this delegitimizing process?

- Other analysts focus on the broad range of social protection systems and employment policies and, in the manner of Esping-Andersen, contrast the “European social model” with the disparate nature of individual member states. The expansion of the EU has significantly added to this disparity and, despite the supremacy of EU law, has even enhanced the different national legal traditions. Competition among member states has intensified. Despite increasing requirements in this respect, regulation at the European level in the area of social policymaking has therefore become more complex. Regardless of the different systems, some authors have identified some common trends in terms of reform. Does this suggest that the crisis might have actually led to increasing convergence among the systems?

- Other researchers have focused on the divergence between European-level policies (where “negative integration”, the “four freedoms of movement” and rules of competition prevail) and competences retained by member-states (the aim being to offset these negative integration effects through the protection of fundamental social rights and the fostering of social and redistributive policies). The decisive role played in this respect by the existing case law of the EU Court of Justice should be emphasised here. In theory, as enshrined in the Treaties, the principle of subsidiarity is supposed to “protect” national competences, especially in the social domain, against all sorts of encroachments by the Commission. But in fact, the principle is deemed to be “political” by the Court of Justice and this (dominant) view more often than not leads to the fact that EU competition law trumps national social legislation as the recent ECJ case law has constantly demonstrated since the late 2000s.

- The fourth focus of existing research is the actual nature of the institutional arrangements that prevailed in the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) constitution from the outset, as well as their impact on national economic and social policies. The European Central Bank’s (ECB) mandate, its implementation, the coordination of economic policy in the form of the Stability and Growth Pact, “structural reforms” aimed at fostering growth by means of market deregulation … all these contributed to macroeconomic imbalances and increased inequality among - and within - member states. It was then down to national labour markets to reduce macroeconomic imbalances by means of flexibility of wages and labour law. Further analysis highlighted the considerable constraints experienced by states with their respective national social models due to increasing socio-fiscal competition, both within the EU and at international level. What are the underlying mechanisms at work in these processes? Is it possible to assess the extent of so-called “fiscal and social dumping”?

- Finally “intra-state federalism” aimed at “maintaining the market”, specific to the EU, entails significant challenges. Up to now, and in order to build a solidarity-based community, national federal states have resorted to methods that are still not viable within the framework of the EU. On the whole, the EU has exercised its regulatory power by means of:
  - the law - with the creation of a set of minimal standards for the few areas of competence shared with member states,
  - structural funds (with a limited impact),
  - Open Methods of Coordination (OMCs) intended to foster “best practices” in the area of employment policy, social inclusion and pensions.
To what extent is the social crisis in the Eurozone the logical consequence of its federal mode of operation?

The Euro crisis is open to different interpretations. Can these interpretations lead to reviewing, adjusting or reconsidering the traditional approaches reviewed here and their possible interaction?

**THEME 2: The new Eurozone governance - origins and its social impact**

The crisis has led to a new form of governance/government and a re-organization of the UEM - directly or indirectly, changes were made in terms of actors, scope and policy instruments. Has the distinction between governance and government, now enshrined by the social sciences, also been affected? Much research has suggested that from a certain point of view the EU has already had *de facto* government for quite some time. Six years into the crisis, what is the situation?

Paradoxically, the shadow cast by the German *ordoliberalism*, albeit little known and understood outside Germany, has influenced this “new governance”. Intergovernmental responses to the crisis, the broadening of the scope for surveillance granted to the Commission have all strongly impacted these transformations. The implementation of Commission’s specific country-by-country recommendations, not to mention those issued by the ECB-IMF-Commission Troika for countries subjected to a *memorandum of understanding*, receive reinforced monitoring. The “Social Europe” referred to in this measure was first and foremost created with coordination of austerity economic policies in mind. Indeed, country-by-country recommendations have now been extended to include measures and outcomes of wage bargaining, labour law and social protection. Yet, despite the controversial legal basis for the reforms and the choices they led to, which were outlined in various works, relatively little has been published on this progress towards a pooling of “social competences”.

Further examination of these reforms is still required, more specifically from the angle of their relation to the hierarchy of legal norms, with the content and objectives of the policies, or with the creation of social policy instruments. Findings on the impact of these reforms on the dynamics of socio-national states are also welcome regarding countries subjected to the Troika adjustment plans. More generally, what are the outcomes of these austerity measures when it comes to the redistribution of income and assets? Finally, what lessons can be drawn concerning the future of the “European Social Model”?

**THEME 3: European institutions - responses to the social crisis - and alternatives**

As the number of citizens in favour of European integration keeps dwindling - especially in those countries where the social crisis is most acute - the response of the European Commission and of other European institutions (the Council of the EU in particular) is threefold:

- more stringent “surveillance” of national social and employment policies,
- *ad hoc* and cyclical actions aimed at showing the “responsive” position of the European Union,

3
• promotion of a “social investment strategy”, presented as the key initiative of the Commission (February 2013).

This is why Europe has seen the development - at different levels - of new policy directions. Their implementation has met with varying levels of success and has generated the following research questions:

• The replacement of the previous strategy by a new “social investment” strategy focused on “flexicurity”, specifically targeting redeployment of “passive” public spending, thereby granting beneficiaries the resources required to adjust to market demands.

Empirical assessments of corresponding policies would be useful. More generally, one can also realistically consider the reassessment of objectives, instruments and the key social areas that generalising a “social investment” approach would entail for systems of social protection.

• Start implementation of a renewed “macroeconomic framework”, decisive for the future of the social dimension within EMU.

To avoid limiting margins for manoeuvre of the redistributive states, driven by increasing mobility of production factors, coordinating budgetary and tax policies appears to be indispensable. In order to move away from the current approach leading to socio-fiscal devaluation, we can also consider how and in which institutional framework (Eurozone? Reinforced cooperation?) this macroeconomic framework can be definitively rebuilt.

• Postpone the project to extend European social competences in order to compensate for the decline in national states’ capacity to take action

One should question the outcomes of the OMC (Open Method of Coordination), one of the main instruments used for the above-mentioned project in the wake of the Lisbon Summit. With hindsight, has this procedural innovation itself become obsolete today? If this is indeed the case, what possible measures and what areas of convergence are now feasible?

• After the discontinuation of the “Social Agenda”, general measures with limited constraints were implemented within the framework of the “Europe 2020” strategy; they aimed at extending social objectives to include “new risks”, sometimes identified using new indicators (early childhood care, reduction of child poverty, failure in school…).

What are the suggestions for making certain social objectives more constraining (introducing European-wide unemployment insurance, previous findings - already dated – on universal income, minimum wage regulation across the EU, etc.); to reconcile the ecological and social dimensions of long-term EU development, to create new ways of pooling social risks – possibly at the EU level –, to support the place granted by the Treaty on the Functioning of the Union for “services of general economic interest”, and finally, to pursue a “policy of cohesion” in a context of increased conditionality?

The management of the Eurozone crisis also brings up many questions, which can be examined in the wake of the previous RFAS (1-2012) special edition on “European and Social Law”. Thus:

• To what extent reference to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the “cross-cutting social clause” (new article 9 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union) can be used to counteract violations of social and labour rights?
What is the state of advancement of the Union’s accession process to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of the Council of Europe and what will it bring about?

Can the legal structure of the Union and the case law of the Court of Justice be amended in order to strike an effective balance between the European Internal Market and the principles of national social law? If so, how can such a process be initiated? How can such a process incorporate legal harmonisation while providing certain leeway at national level, as provided for in international law (and, in particular, in line with the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)?

Finally, the question of national cultures could be covered – a central issue especially when it comes to social welfare. In this area:

Research undertaken to objectively measure a certain “Europeanisation” of societies. Does this research provide evidence - beyond reactions to top-down standards imposed by institutions and governments - of a genuine Europeanisation of the classic mechanisms of socialization, mobility, even identification?

It is therefore feasible to foster the emergence of a “sense of belonging “with a “shared destiny” (community of fate)?

How can we foster a democratic European common public space for exchange, thereby giving substance to the sense of “living together”?

Further information on the contents of this call for submissions may be obtained by contacting Jean Claude Barbier and Arnaud Lechevalier who drafted this call for contributions at the following addresses:

jean-claude.barbier@univ-paris1.fr
and
Arnaud.Lechevalier@univ-paris1.fr

Articles must be written in French or in English

If you wish to submit a paper on this question you are requested to send it, together with a résumé and presentation of the author to: rfas-drees@sante.gouv.fr

Before March 15, 2015

Instructions for authors (including editorial standards) are available at:

1 Selected articles will be translated into French by the RFAS and the English version will be available online.