

New publication

Social developments in the European Union 2011

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2011 was a year marked by some key progress in European integration: new moves towards Treaty revision, new rules for economic and budgetary coordination, and a more evident role of the EU in national policymaking. In parallel, the destabilisation of the euro zone progressed: the long-term effects of the Greek crisis have not been tackled by European policymakers, while tension shifted from the EU periphery to the very core of the euro zone. Most Member States pursued punitive austerity measures. All these trends undoubtedly represent worrying signs for the future of the European Social Model.

The European Union is therefore dealing with crucial questions about its future sustainability: the fate of the euro is in jeopardy, as is the very meaning of the European integration project. A new compromise is needed between economic competitiveness and social solidarity. Otherwise, the risk will be an increase in public disaffection towards Europe and reciprocal accusations of egoism and lack of strategic views among the Member States.

This 2011 edition of Social developments in the European Union examines the ways in which the EU has changed in this turbulent phase. Institutional innovations were paralleled by new economic governance tools and further reinforcement of the austerity paradigm. Beyond economic governance, this volume sheds light on the state of European social dialogue, the role of structural funds, the fate of the social dimension of Europe 2020, and the activities of the European Court of Justice. Analysis of the EU level is complemented by a critical review of national reforms, especially in the case of health care.

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