

Invitation

wiiw seminar series

'Policy Perspectives for European Integration'

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The Social Dimension of the EU and the EMU – the way forward

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(entrance from the ground floor)

Abstract

A strong social dimension is indispensable for the legitimacy of the EU. However, the social agenda of the EU has been defined in the Delors era, and it has been primarily focusing on social legislation. Together with cohesion instruments in the EU budget, social legislation has ensured that the single market does not lead to a polarisation among Member States and it makes real convergence possible. However, the establishment of a minimalist monetary union produced new types of financial and social risks, and the crisis of the EMU has resulted in massive divergence and a weakening of the national welfare systems. The financial crisis has produced an unprecedented social crisis, and it would be illusory to assume that the social agenda alone can compensate for the malfunctioning of the monetary union. It is the monetary union itself which needs to be reconstructed. All countries in the EU have the ambition to be welfare states in the sense of being able to control unemployment, poverty and income inequality. The eurozone crisis has severely damaged this capacity in countries of the eurozone periphery. Since the EMU controls most of the parameters that frame national welfare systems, and especially fiscal capacity, social policy cannot be a matter of subsidiarity either. The EU social agenda has to cover a wide spectrum of policies (policy coordination, legislation, budget resources) but today the key question is how to strengthen the social dimension of the EMU and counter social divergence.

László Andor is head of department of economic policy at the Corvinus University of Budapest and a Senior Research Fellow at the Hans Böckler Stiftung, Düsseldorf. He was EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion in the Barroso II Commission (2010-14). Since stepping down from the Commission, he has been teaching at Hertie School of Governance (Berlin) and at ULB (Brussels). László Andor studied at Karl Marx (now Corvinus) University of Economics and the University of Manchester (UK). He continued additional studies in the United States, Norway and the Netherlands. Between 1991 and 2005, he taught political science and economic policy in Budapest, and he was editor of the social science journal Eszmélet. He has also taught at Rutgers (USA) and advised the World Bank on SAPRI. From 2005 until 2010 he was a Member of the Board of Directors of the EBRD (London), representing the Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary and Slovakia. Currently he is Policy Fellow at IZA (Institute for the Study of Labour, Bonn), a Senior Adviser at EPC, a member of RAND Europe's Council of Advisors, a member of the Board of Trustees of Friends of Europe, and member of the Board of Directors of Notre Europe (Paris).

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The wiiw seminar series '**Policy Perspectives for European Integration**' is the continuation of three earlier wiiw seminar series: 'Crisis management in Central, East and Southeast Europe: What is to be done?'; 'Policy options for the post-crisis economy in Central, East and Southeast Europe'; and 'EU in Crisis'. In this series, our emphasis is on issues that affect the future of the European Union: we look at the policy perspectives which may emerge after the crisis and affect the EU and its neighbourhood. Reforms of the EMU, the closer fiscal and economic cooperation of the Member States, bail-out schemes, solutions to the prevailing debt problems in the Southern Rim of the Union, the controversial relations between the EU and Russia affecting border countries and, furthermore, migration policy challenges within the EU and with neighbouring regions are topics we expect to remain of utmost importance in this and the coming years. Policies impacting on the further integration of the new Member States and future enlargements of the EU will remain an integral part of the discourse in this seminar series as well.

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Michael Landesmann
Scientific Director wiiw

Dr. Sándor Richter
Organiser