

Programme Horizon 2020- Pillar Societal Challenge-6-

Call: Governance for the future

Topic Id: Governance-04- 2019- **Deadline 14 March, 2019**17:00

Topic: Enhancing social rights and EU citizenship

Specific Challenge:

“Boosting social rights can help address divergence in social trends among Member States and reduce the risk of socio-economic shocks. At the same time, social rights are essential for the full realisation of **EU citizenship** and in reaching the EU’s targets in **reducing poverty and social exclusion**. By mitigating social risks and by assisting people with transitions and vulnerabilities, social rights can boost **trust in public governance**. The challenge is to integrate the social dimension into European policies and to connect it with European citizenship, moving beyond the traditional focus on mobile citizens to look also at those who are ‘immobile’”.

Our project aims to respond to the Pillar Societal Challenge-6, enhancing social rights and citizenship, by pursuing **three main objectives**:

- A) Contribute to improving the current regulatory framework of social citizenship of the European Union;
- B) Highlight case studies that may contribute to constructing the narrative of European citizenship;
- C) Provide recommendations for the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and for the exercise of social rights as an integral part of European citizenship;

1. Overcoming the State of the Art

To achieve these objectives our proposal aims to **move beyond the state of the art** starting from the awareness that the construction of a solid social Europe is a primary objective to bring the European project closer to citizens.

The EU itself is founded on the principle of respect for human rights (Article 2 TEU) and is committed to combating social exclusion and poverty as part of its fundamental objectives (Article 3 TEU). Social rights are also recognized and rendered justiciable by the provisions of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of the European Union, a legally binding and fundamental element of the Union’s legal order since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. The values expressed by the European Treaties and the European Charter of Fundamental Rights constitute a contribution to the definition of a framework of values, a “moral order” capable of providing support for the exercise of political authority (Ferrera Burelli 2018) and are therefore fundamental for the development of a territorial community such as the European Union. However, starting from the nineties, symbols and values referable to the European socio-economic sphere have experienced a progressive “anti-solidarity drift” (Scharpf 2010, 2014).

Furthermore, EU policy in this area has struggled to deliver concrete results or maintain consistency with other aspects of EU action policy.

Also on the basis of this awareness, on 26 April 2017 the European Commission published a series of documents, including a Recommendation (COM [2017] 2600 final) on the European Pillar of Social Rights, which aims to ensure the proper functioning and equity of labour markets and social protection systems in the European Union (EU).

This is a fundamental step **marking the beginning of a renewed effort for strengthening social rights, for which the Pillar of Social Rights represents a general framework for actions taken at various levels, at European, national, regional and local levels of the individual Member States.**

With respect to this renewed challenge concerning the enhancement of social rights and citizenship, **our project aims to help overcome the current European regulatory framework in which European citizenship is conceived as an instrument of social integration but is limited to the citizens of the Member States of the Union moving within European borders.** Specifically, European citizenship has so far been interpreted as a sort of transnational status of access to social rights guaranteed by each Member State in the context of the respective welfare state system (Giubboni 2013).

Up to now, the group of citizens who have most benefited from membership of the European Union are the so-called movers, those who are involved in some experience of intra-European mobility. **Therefore, what has been lacking is the construction of a supranational concept of European citizenship complementary to the effective guarantee of social rights.**

Indeed investing in the vertical dimension of European citizenship also means increasing the loyalty of the so-called stay-at-home who, while continuing to reside in the same State, may be entitled to a supplementary share of measures and resources provided directly by the EU, to be added to those conferred by national or regional governments (Sevan Corti, 2017) (Law, Sociology, Economics).

Today this relationship between European citizenship and social rights is part of a **complex political-institutional framework, conditioned by the constraints and architecture outlined by the new European economic governance. The need to find effective balancing mechanisms between the economic and the social dimensions of the process of European integration has become more pronounced.**

With respect to these problems, also previous studies have provided few indications on how to effectively combine European citizenship, work and access to social rights, since in most cases a sectorial method, not an interdisciplinary one, but has been followed, based on the analysis of the regulatory framework or of social and economic policies, or on comparative historical analysis.

Our project aims to **go beyond this study approach to analyze the actual application and effectiveness of the provisions related to social and citizenship rights with regard to the multiple dimensions in which these rights are set.**

These are aspects that will be studied with an interdisciplinary approach, integrating a **top-down** perspective (which includes the creation at a European and national level of a social, regulatory and economic policy) with a **bottom-up** one (which observes the implementation

of policies in social-organizational systems at a **local level and the role of participation** as a tool for implementing social policies).

2. The Two Perspectives of the Interdisciplinary Approach: Top-Down / Bottom-Up

2.1 Top-down Analysis

Our team believes that the analysis should be aimed at indicating mechanisms for **balancing economic and financial objectives, set by European economic and financial planning, and the enhancement of social policies and European citizenship implemented at a national and local level.**

The relation between economic and social policies is the **pivotal idea of our proposal**, around which the study of solutions aimed at enhancing the implementation of the European Social Pillar will be developed in a complementary and interdisciplinary way.

One of the starting points is the analysis of the potential of the **European Semester which, in addition to being an instrument for coordinating economic, employment and social policies of the Member States, has proved to be a valid instrument for the improvement of structural reforms implemented at a national level.**

In particular, during the European Semester of recent years, an enhancement of the social dimension has been recorder, which could be enhanced in a complementary way together with the implementation of the European Social Pillar, using the procedures of European economic Governance as levers to increase convergence of social and economic progress.

Tools that have just been introduced, such as the **Social Scoreboard**, risk failing to effectively rebalance governance tools because they neglect key trends, such as the deterioration of the effectiveness of social security systems, the persistence and severity of poverty and social exclusion, the increase of job insecurity, poor levels of employment and economic accessibility, as well as funding for the development of community-based services.

In particular, we believe it is necessary to **simplify the budgetary rules** and contribute to providing solutions to trace, within the allocation of resources, a clear distinction between **investment expenses and current expenses.**

Currently, this distinction does not exist, and the consequence is that, with reference to compliance with the Stability and Growth Pact of each Member State, no difference is made between cuts in social safety and social services and cuts to other expenses, including military expenditure.

The current regulatory framework, in fact, does not take into account the growing evidence of economic and social returns of certain types of public spending, such as: **early childhood education and care, equal opportunities, measures to combat poverty and social housing.**

Moreover, given that local and regional authorities are more involved in the financing of social services, it can be noted that European fiscal rules have had a negative impact on the development of this sector of the public administration.

In this perspective, the visibility of “socialization” of the European Semester throughout the process of development and implementation must be guaranteed, and in particular in the national reform programs and country-specific recommendations.

Following a **top-down** approach, the analysis of the impact of the **European Semester on social systems** will be conducted with an interdisciplinary and comparative approach. From a theoretical and conceptual point of view, contributions from various fields – sociological, historical, philosophical, legal, economic and statistical – will be provided.

From an empirical point of view, firstly the trends of the financial resources allocated by national budgets will be traced with respect to the objectives indicated by the European Commission and the European Council within the European semester (Table 1).

Tab.1-Translation of the objectives indicated by the Commission and by the Council in national budgets				
	Nordic Model (Norway, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Netherlands in part)	Liberal Model (Ireland and Great Britain)	Corporatist Model (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany and Luxemburg)	Mediterranean Model (Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain)
Combating poverty	Analysis for the Netherlands and Finland only?	Only Ireland?	All aspects are included in the analysis	All aspects are included in the analysis
Equal opportunities	Analysis for the Netherlands and Finland only	Only Ireland?	All aspects are included in the analysis	All aspects are included in the analysis
Early childhood education and care	Analysis for the Netherlands and Finland only	Only Ireland?	All aspects are included in the analysis	All aspects are included in the analysis

More specifically, our team will analyze case studies **identifiable as belonging to one of the four models of welfare state**: the Social Democratic/Nordic Model, Anglo-Saxon/Liberal Model, Corporatist/Continental Model, and the Mediterranean model. Particular attention will be given to the role that local governments play in the different models of welfare state, in the establishment and implementation of four policies in particular, which are: **combating poverty, equal opportunities, early childhood education and care** (Table 2).

The decision to concentrate the analysis on these policies is motivated by their intrinsic and reciprocal connection with the principle of equality and non-discrimination, the central Pillar of European citizenship (Articles 3 and 9 TEU).

The guarantee of the principle of equality and with it the realization of European citizenship risks being developed at a merely formal level if it is not accompanied by an effective guarantee of the social rights that contribute to the formation of the individual from early childhood, guaranteeing support in the access to a free and dignified existence, in conditions of equal opportunity.

Tab.2 Policies analysed in the four European welfare state models				
	Nordic Model (Norway, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Netherlands in part)	Liberal Model (Ireland and Great Britain)	Corporatist Model (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany and Luxemburg)	Mediterranean Model (Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain)
Combating Poverty: 1) Effectiveness of means 2) Money transfers 3) Active assistance measures	3) Models of active welfare (see Denmark). Useful indications for European, national and local institutions	1) Effectiveness of means-tested measures. Indications for European, national and local institutions	2) Method and effectiveness of cash transfers . Indications for European, national and local institutions	2) Method and effectiveness of cash transfers . Indications for European, national and local institutions
Equal opportunities 1) Access to the labour market 2) Equal pay 3) Gender equality and media 4) Equal access to political decision-making processes 5) Legislation aimed at gender equality 6) Evolution of national and European jurisprudence	All aspects are included in the analysis	All aspects are included in the analysis	All aspects are included in the analysis	All aspects are included in the analysis
Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC): 1) Policies for funding access to education and assistance 2) Initiatives that have improved access to education and assistance 3) Relationship between access to education and primary care and maternal employment	All aspects are included in the analysis	All aspects are included in the analysis	All aspects are included in the analysis	All aspects are included in the analysis

The comparison between different case studies aims to identify essential levels of welfare benefits necessary for the effective realization of European citizenship. In this perspective, our consortium of universities aims to create a **workshop for research**, observation and evaluation of the capacity of different national/regional systems to implement a set of minimum standards/social rights functional to the defence of European citizenship. **The activity of the interuniversity research laboratory and its results will be disseminated through European, national and regional institutions.**

2.2. Bottom-up Analysis

Top down analysis will be completed by a bottom up analysis in order to understand how the policies set at a European and national level are implemented at a regional level. In particular, starting from the role that local governments play in the implementation of public policies, our proposal intends to concentrate on the **participation and contribution that civil society** can offer in the phase of disbursement, management and assessment of financing in order to build a **civil and social dialogue** functional to greater cohesion.

Coherently with the spirit of Article 11, par. 1, TEU, the **involvement of the civil society organizations allows representatives of the State, regions and local governments to work together; these organizations are representative of the interests of subjects often underrepresented in the decision-making process.**

Yet participation is a strategic tool for assessing the impact of policies and for improving them (Table 3).

For this reason, our team believes that it is of fundamental importance to provide indications on the strengthening of the instruments for **participation** both in the phase of drafting the objectives pursued by the European Pillar of Social Rights and in that of implementation.

In parallel, therefore, a bottom-up approach will be followed to analyze the **contribution of civil society participation in the formulation and implementation of social policies.**

In this context, particular attention will be given to the role of ICT in the processes of participation.

Comparisons will be conducted with respect to participation tools in the definition and implementation of the policies of the main welfare systems, taking into account three reference parameters: **information, consultation, active participation.**

Tab. 3 Participated assessment of the impact of policies				
	Nordic Model (Norway, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Netherlands in part)	Liberal Model (Ireland and Great Britain)	Corporatist Model (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany and Luxemburg)	Mediterranean Model (Greece, Italy, Portugal and Span)
Combating Poverty		Only Ireland?	All aspects are included in the analysis	All aspects are included in the analysis
Equal opportunities	Analysis only for the Netherlands and Finland	Only Ireland?	All aspects are included in the analysis	All aspects are included in the analysis
Early Childhood Education and Care	Analysis only for the Netherlands and Finland	Only Ireland?	All aspects are included in the analysis	All aspects are included in the analysis

3. Impact and Dissemination

The interdisciplinary method adopted by our research will allow to provide a long-term vision on the main issues of European citizenship; it will be possible to compare the different models of citizenship and to gather useful indications in relation to economic impact and general well-being.

The comparison between different welfare systems will allow to highlight the case studies able to provide indications for a new concept of social citizenship. Specific attention will be given to the contents of social citizenship and to the relationship between the exercise of social rights and the improvement of economic and social welfare. **In particular, our proposal, thanks to the activity of our inter-university workshop, will be able to identify an essential minimum level of welfare benefits to be guaranteed for the effective realization of European citizenship.** Analysis will allow to identify the ways in which the approval of the European Social Pillar and the planning of a new European Financial Framework can be better oriented towards policies to **combat poverty and social exclusion**, job insecurity and obstacles to accessing social protection, especially with regard to the more vulnerable sectors of the population such as women and minors (Article 3, par.3 TUE) (sociology, public law).

The results of the research will not only make a contribution to **the improvement of the present European regulatory framework for social citizenship, but will also provide indications for the effective development of European social rights.**

The analysis of case studies from various welfare state models will also allow to highlight the **advantages and/or the pitfalls of a harmonization process of social policies among the different Member States of the European Union.**

In this perspective, in order to promote new policies to enhance the exercise of social rights and citizenship, especially by means of participation tools, a first result will be the creation of a **network of workshops** that will hold periodical meetings not only with experts participating in the project, but also with external experts, stakeholders and political consultants.

The aim of the workshop activities will be to **provide the European institutions, both national and local, with a long-term vision on the main issues related to social rights and European citizenship**, through the comparison of the different models, which will allow to grasp useful indications with regard to economic impact and general well-being.

This way, the activity of the network of workshops will foster transnational and cross-sectoral learning and enable EU Member States, and in particular their political and academic leaders, to **exchange knowledge and models.**

Furthermore, it will be possible to provide European, national and local policy makers with support in the development of policies and instruments increasingly suitable for achieving the objectives of enhancing the enjoyment of social rights and citizenship.

Our concrete work:

The work packages will be divided into **four cluster**, which concentrate on the interactions between rules and practices and on a combination of historical, sociological and comparative methodologies, described in the following section.

Cluster 1: The social citizenship: policy, process and perspectives

Cluster 2: The European social citizenship in the regulatory frameworks

Cluster 3: The social citizenship: policies and best practices

Cluster 4: Dissemination

Managerial

The Unit Coordination Team has overall responsibility for consortium management and reporting. They will be assisted by a project manager and **the University of Pisa Grant Office**.

The main objective of the Unit Coordination is to administer the entire project and coordinate the on-going work among all partners and with the European Commission services.

The objectives are to ensure that the project progresses according to the schedule and within the budgetary constraints set out in the proposal; that all deliverables are finished on time and are of high quality; that the project's scientific and technical objectives are achieved; that cost statements, reports and other necessary documents from all partners are delivered to the Commission in a timely manner; that project meetings are well organised and adequately reported; that project communication channels are effective, efficient and transparent for all concerned.