

**« The europeanization of the reforms of welfare systems »
A Connex workshop / an Espanet Expert seminar
8-10 March 2007**

Since late 2005, a comparative trans-national research project on the “politics of welfare reforms in continental Europe” has been conducted by Bruno Palier. The principal aim of the project is to evaluate the impact of the similar social protection institutions that characterise Bismarckian welfare states - eligibility based on work, earnings-related benefits, contribution financing and devolved para-state management - on the politics, timing and content of social reforms over the last 25 years. The basic hypothesis lays on the idea that these countries share the same problems and politics of reforms, and may follow similar reforms trajectories, leading to an Europeanization of welfare reforms.

The project systematically compares patterns of reform in Bismarckian welfare states/programmes, aiming to explain commonalities and differences, and to understand and draw out the implications of innovations that have been introduced in Bismarckian systems in recent years. This third seminar is an attempt to wrap up the lessons of this comparative project, and is aimed at providing a new understanding of welfare reforms in continental Europe, but also orientation for innovation as well as assessment of the political conditions in which welfare reforms can be implemented. Evidence of an Europeanization of welfare reforms are critically analysed. The expert seminar will be an opportunity to present and discuss the policy implications of the findings of this research project, and their implication for national and European policies.

Thursday 8/3/7

14.00-15.00: Introduction

Bruno Palier:

« The politics of reforms in Bismarckian welfare systems, our common questions, our different answers. What we can learn from the papers? ».

15.00-18.00: Session I. Facing the Welfare without work problem

Daniel Clegg :

« Unemployment Policy Reform in ‘Bismarckian’ Welfare States the Cases of Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands ».

Break

Nathalie Morel :

« From Subsidiarity to “Free Choice”: Child- and Elderly-care Policy Reforms in France, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands ».

Anton Hemerijck et Ive Marx :

« Redirecting Continental Welfare in Belgium and the Netherlands ».

Friday 9/3/7

09.00-11.00: Session II. The importance of sequences in the reforms

Giuliano Bonoli et Bruno Palier :

« Comparing Old Age Insurance Reforms in Bismarckian Welfare Systems ».

Karl Hinrichs :

« A Social Insurance State Withers Away. Welfare State Reforms in Germany – or: Attempts to Turn Around in a Cul-de-sac ».

11.00-13.00: Session III. Political institutions and welfare institutions

Herbert Obinger:

« Austria: Janus-faced developments in an archetypical Bismarckian welfare state »

Silja Häusermann :

« Reform Opportunities in a Bismarckian Latecomer: Restructuring the Swiss Welfare State ».

13.00-14.30: Lunch

14.30-18.30 : Session IV. The importance of social insurance institutions

Patrick Hassenteufel et Bruno Palier Bruno Palier:

« Comparing Health Insurance Reforms in Bismarckian Countries: From Path Dependent to Path Breaking Changes? ».

Ana Guillén :

« Defrosting the Spanish Welfare State: The Weight of Conservative and Corporatist Traditions ».

Break

Alfio Cerami :

« The Politics of Reforms in Bismarckian Welfare Systems: The Cases of Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia ».

Bruno Palier :

« Farewell to Bismarckianism? Welfare Reforms in France ».

Saturday 10/3/7

09.30-12.30: Session V. From independent to dependant variable : when Bismarckian structures are reformed

Bernhard Ebbinghaus :

« Reforming Bismarckian Corporatism: The Changing Role of Social Partnership in Continental Europe ».

Philip Manow :

« Changes in Financing the Bismarckian welfare systems ».

12.30-14.00: Lunch

14.00-16.00 : Session VI. Bismarckian welfare systems under European pressures

Philippe Pochet :

« Influence of European Integration on National Social Policy Reforms ».

Matteo Jessoula et Tiziana Alti :

« Re-balancing the Italian welfare state: a missed opportunity? ».

16.00-18.00 : Conclusion. Changing by learning ?

Anton Hemerijck :

« Continental Welfare Beyond Breadwinner Resilience ».

Wrap up discussion