European Expert Group Meeting
“Confronting family poverty and social exclusion; ensuring work-family balance; advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity in Europe”

Convened as part of preparations for the Twentieth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, 2014 (Cfr. Report of the Secretary-General, Preparations for and observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014, A/67/61-E/2012/3)

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Introductory remarks: Family resilience

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Risk and resilience

• Resilience tied to risk

• What are the risks facing families?
  • … how can families show resilience in facing these risks?
  • … and how can policies reduce risk / help families to be resilient?
Sources of risk

• Demography

• (Labour) market

• (Welfare) states

• All of the are “class-biased” -> their occurrence and effects are not random, but differ between socioeconomic groups
Demographic sources

• Increase in family instability and single parenthood

• Difficulties in the transition to adulthood and family formation -> postponed parenthood
  • Postponement, however, also can have benefits

• Population aging
  • Possible need to care for aging (grand-)parents
  • Also a possibility

• These processes linked to socioeconomic characteristics
Single parenthood trends by education, %

**Great Britain**

- Low
- Middle
- High

**Denmark**

- Low
- Middle
- High

**West Germany**

- Low
- Middle
- High

**Italy**

- Low
- Middle
- High

*Source: Mannheim Eurobarometer Trend File, own calculations*
(Labour) market risks

- Unemployment
  - Especially, its accumulation to families
  - Also, unemployment and income traps

- Precarious employment, especially among youth
  - Also, low-waged labour and limited chances for improvement
  - Poor and stressful working conditions, work hours

- Again, class-biased
(Welfare) state risks

- Poor support in terms of cash transfers and services

- Unintended policy consequences
  - E.g., Income and unemployment traps

- Pressures from the economic crisis? Will cuts be targeted at families (less political power)?
  - In previous decades already, the economic position of kids and families declined relative to elderly
(Some) aspects of family resilience

- Coping with increased family diversity
- Labour supply strategies
  - Dual-earner vs single-earner families
  - Need to balance work and family; job quality
- Policies and (welfare) states
  - Provision of support: Cash or services?
- Gender aspects: Men contribution to care still lagging, although women’s contribution to the economy increased
Thank you!