APPLICATION FORM FOR PROSPECTIVE WORKSHOP DIRECTORS

If you wish to apply to direct a workshop at the Joint Sessions in Granada, Spain, in Spring 2005, send the form below as the **cover sheet** and a separate **workshop proposal** to the ECPR Central Services. You can do this by either emailing both documents as an attached file (in word format .doc or rich text format .rtf) to the ECPR Central Services at ecpr@essex.ac.uk. Alternatively, you can print up the information and send it as a fax to the Central Services, fax: +44 1206 872500. The deadline for applications is **15 February 2004**.

**Title of proposed workshop:**

EU Social Policy: Europeanisation or the Persistence of National Differences?

**Abstract of proposed workshop. Maximum of 250 words (suitable for publication in the academic programme leaflet and on the ECPR web site):**

This workshop focuses on the dynamics of social policy integration in the EU. The theoretical literature identifies three pathways of EU influence on national welfare states: first, direct pressures stemming from social policy competencies delegated to the EU (i.e. health and safety); second, direct pressures caused by market integration (i.e. adapting labour mobility law to EU standards); and finally, indirect pressures caused by market integration (social dumping etc). We encourage papers that analyse the impact of all three types of influence on national welfare states as well as papers that analyse developments at the EU level. To organise the workshop, we have identified five general themes:

1. How has European integration influenced the development of national welfare states? Is it possible to trace changes in the institutional structure and normative underpinnings of national welfare states back to European integration? Has European integration led to convergence or divergence in national social policies?
2. What explains processes of member state adaptation to European pressures for social policy change? Are domestic structures the main explanatory variable as Historical Institutionalism predicts, or are other variables important?
3. What is the role of EU-level institutions in processes of social policy integration?
4. Is the OMC a viable complement to the Community Method and will it live up to its high expectations?
5. What are likely to be the future developments, prospects and perils of European social policy integration?

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EU Social Policy: Europeanisation or the Persistence of National Differences?

Outline of the Topic

During the past two decades, the influence of the European Union on national welfare states has increased significantly. It is now generally acknowledged that most national social policy developments cannot be understood without taking into account the role of the European Union. The impact of the EU on social policy is not well understood, however, partly because policy areas where the Union has a robust policy mandate (for example in health and safety regulation and the coordination of national security systems) co-exist with those which are nominally under firm member-state control. Moreover, even when member states retain legal control over social policy legislation, the side effects of market integration may create constraints on member states’ social policy-making autonomy.

Until recently, most research about the impact of the EU on national welfare states emphasised the minimal impact of EU intervention (see for example, Lange 1992, Majone 1996, Streeck 1995). Yet a closer look reveals that the EU and national level are increasingly interwoven; ten years ago Leibfried and Pierson (1995) argued that scholars should conceptualise the EU and its member states as ‘semi-sovereign entities’ in social policy. Thus the absence of strong supra-national competencies does not mean that the EU or European integration as such have only a limited influence on social policy – though ‘European social policy’ is still an incoherent, fragmented and patchy policy field. Moreover, European integration should not solely be discussed in terms of imposing constraints on member states, rather it also provides ample opportunities re-conceptualising and re-orienting social policy both at the supra-national and national level.

In line with recent research, we identify at least three ‘pathways of Europeanisation’: first, the direct pressure of EU initiatives; second, the direct pressure of legal requirements; and finally, the indirect pressures of market integration. The past decade has been a particularly interesting one in terms of the first pathway, since social policy is increasingly subject to the Open Method of Coordination (OMC). The OMC is a core element of the new politics of European social policy integration. The OMC might be a useful tool with the potential to penetrate areas hitherto jealously guarded as being within exclusive member-state competency. Though still a contested policy instrument and in some policy fields still in its infancy, we now have reliable empirical evidence that allows us to both take stock and
discuss the merits of OMC, as well as the added value, prospects, and perils of this new mode of soft policy co-ordination (‘management by objectives’).

In this workshop, we intend to shed light on the impact of European integration and EU policy making on social policy at both the EU and member state levels, as well as the merging of both levels into a new, complex, multi-level, multi-actor European welfare state in which both levels – depending on the social policy at issue - have different competencies, functions and responsibilities. Against this background, European social policy integration is marked by both convergence and harmonisation on the one hand and institutional and policy diversity on the other.

Relation to existing research

The first wave of research concerning the relationship between the EU and national welfare states emphasized the minimal impact of EU intervention, attributing it mainly to the weakness of relevant EU institutions. EU influence on social welfare policy, it was argued, was likely to result in “fragmented, partial, and piecemeal” policies (Lange 1992) and the EU’s role in social policy making would be limited to a neoliberal, regulatory approach in which symbolic politics play a large role (Majone 1996).

The most recent wave of research concerning the impact of Europeanization on domestic social policy takes issue with the minimalist interpretation of the EU’s impact. For example, Pierson and Leibfried (1995) argue that EU institutions occupy the central level of a multi-tiered system of social policy governance. Other recent studies have built on this earlier work by investigating the expanded role of policymaking at EU level and the emergence of corporatist policymaking institutions in the EU (Falkner). Despite this recognition that the EU context influences social policy developments at the member state level, there is comparatively little research about the type, extent, and processes through which European integration influences welfare state development. This is true despite recent work that carefully investigates the interaction between pressures created by European integration and the domestic-level political processes that filter these pressures for change (i.e. Cowles, Risse and Caporaso 2001).

Since the publication of Leibfried and Pierson’s appeal to study EU social policy as a multi-tiered system of governance in-the-making, there is a growing literature on both EU level institution building in social policy (European harmonisation and regulation) in various policy fields and on the impact of European integration on domestic welfare states in general and specific policy fields in particular. There is meanwhile a rich body of literature on European social policy as such (i.e. Hantrais 2001; Geyer 2001); on the discussion of the European welfare state model (Wincott 2003) on the discussion of different policy fields, like health policy and public health, pensions, social inclusion/exclusion, parental leave, employment Policy, the ‘Open Method and Co-ordination’ and its implications for policy convergence, and for policy transfer and policy diffusion, on the effects of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, on the Social Partners/Social Dialogue (Falkner 1998; Roberts/Springer 2000), on the implications of the principle of subsidiarity on the further development of European social policy, and on the development of a European social citizenship.

Additionally, much has been written on the impact of the EU/European integration on national welfare-states, not least with regard to the impact of the single market (i.e. Scharpf), on the impact of the EU/European integration on the accession countries, and on national adaptations to European
integration pressures not least via national social pacts. Besides the politics of national social policy reform (Pierson 1995; Anderson 2001) have been a challenging research area not only since the beginning of retrenchment politics in western welfare states. Much of this type of research falls within the larger category of the “Europeanization literature” dealing both with the phenomenon of Europeanisation as such (i.e. Featherstone/Radaelli 2003; Börzel and Risse 2003) or in relation to national adaptations to Europeanisation including, aspects of institutional fit and misfit and (i.e. Börzel), national veto points (i.e Haverland 2000) or path-dependencies (i.e. Pierson ). Another growth area in the theoretical literature falls under the label “Multilevel governance” (Hooghe/Marks) which can be referred to as a synonym for research perspectives with focus on both the dispersion of competences and responsibilities on the one side and the analysis of interactive processes of governance on the other. The latter aspect includes as well the analysis of the role of European institutions in social policy integration, like the Commission, or different modes of governance, such as regulation (i.e. Majone ) or new types of integration, such as closer co-operation and differentiated integration (i.e. Scharpf 1999).

Our research questions are closely related to current research on European social policy integration. 1. How has European integration influenced the development of national welfare states? Is it possible to trace changes in the institutional structure and normative underpinnings of national welfare states back to European integration? Has European integration led to convergence or divergence in national social policies? 2. What explains processes of member state adaptation to European pressures for social policy change? Are domestic structures the main explanatory variable as Historical Institutionalism predicts, or are other variables important? 3. What is the role of EU-level institutions in processes of social policy integration? 4. Is the OMC a viable complement to the Community Method and will it live up to its high expectations? 5. What are likely to be the future developments, prospects and perils of European social policy integration? In this respect, we encourage cross-national comparisons and cross-sectoral comparisons as well as in-depth case studies.

Participants
Various research projects have been initiated at universities and research institutes in Europe and the USA that aim to investigate the politics and policies of European social policy integration and patterns of national adaptation. These organizations include: the Zentrum fuer Sozialpolitik, University of Bremen (Leibfried), the Max-Planck-Institute, Cologne (Falkner, Scharpf), the ESRC funded project “Globalisation and the European Social Model’ in Brussels, the work of the European University Institute Florence and the European Union Studies Center, The City University of New York (Christa Altenstetter). Likely participants include Daniel Wincott (University of Birmingham); Giuliano Bonoli (University of Fribourg); Traute Meyer (University of Southampton); Martin Rhodes (European University Institute); Anton Hemerijck (WRR, Den Haag); Philippe Pochet (OSI, Brussels); Caroline de la Porte (EUI); Linda Hantrais (Loughborough University); Gerda Falker (University of Vienna); Laura Cram (University of Strathclyde); Monika Steffen (University of Grenoble); Stephan Leibfried (University of Bremen); Paul Pierson (Harvard University); Maurizio Ferrera (Milan); Bruno Palier (Paris); Sven Jochem (University of Konstanz); Antonia Gohr (University Bremen); Elisa Chulia (UNED Madrid); Jochen Clasen (Stirling University); Jon Kvist (SFI, Copenhagen); Kerstin Jacobsson (University of Stockholm); Madeleine Hosli (Leiden University); Ute Behning (Institute fuer Hoehere Studien, Vienna);
Christa Altenstetter (The City University of New York). We will also make every effort to encourage participation by scholars working in East and Central Europe.

**Types of paper**
We encourage theoretical as well as empirical papers which address the relationship, prospects and challenges of European social policy integration. This includes both case studies on particular policy fields (specifically comparative ones) and studies which focus on the processes of integration at the EU and domestic level. Finally, we would also encourage papers which discuss the application of the OMC in specific social policy fields such as employment policy, social exclusion, pension policy or health policy.

**Funding**
We expect to be successful in attracting financial support from our home universities; the Dutch and German national science Foundations (NOW and DFG) as well as from other European sources. In addition, the research projects mentioned above include some financial support for members to participate in conferences like the ECPR.

**Biographical note**
Karen Anderson is currently Assistant Professor in the Public Administration Department at Leiden University in the Netherlands. Her current research focuses on the political economy of welfare state reform in Europe, including the impact of European integration on national welfare states. She has published several book chapters and articles on welfare state reform in Sweden, and her most recent work investigates the politics of pension reforms in Sweden, Germany, and the Netherlands. Wolfram Lamping is Assistant Professor at the Institute for Political Science at the University of Hanover. He teaches in social policy, both from a comparative and a European perspective. His main interests are welfare state reforms in European countries and the impact of European integration on national welfare states. He recently finished his habilitation which is on the processes, logic and rationalities of health policy integration. See as well: Wolfram Lamping 2004: European Integration and Health Policy – Remarks on a Peculiar Relationship, in: Monika Steffen (ed.): The Europeanisation of Health Policy (forthcoming: Routledge) and Wolfram Lamping/Friedbert W. Rüb 2004: From the Conservative Welfare State to an ‘Uncertain Something Else’: German Pension Politics in Comparative Perspective, in: Policy & Politics 2/2004.

References available on request.