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## A Report from the Polish Conference "Active Social Policy from the Point of View of Social Europe"

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Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

would be decisively less rich). Methodological issues are discussed only on a few pages of the introduction, thus, they do not comprise a separate chapter, which would be expected in this kind of work as a kind of standard. Unfortunately, it weakens the justification of the author's conclusion. Since the empirical basis of the work is not unified, it is not certain if it can be justified to conclude that in the areas of the former PGRs we are dealing with a process of formation of the underclass, whose members differ from the rest of society in their subculture, based on a separate axiological system. Even if it is true (and I tend to believe it), it seems at least disputable to acknowledge the suggested by Karwacki understanding of success in the area of limiting the intergeneration transmission of poverty. The emphasis, which he puts in the fragment quoted above, on the issue of the young returning to their family environment is in my understanding utopian. The revitalization of local communities still remains, of course, an important instrument in the policy of preventing social exclusion. However, it seems that actions directed at the prevention of inheriting poverty from generation to generation can be also considered successful when they assume the necessity for the young to leave their local environments in search for work and a better quality of life.

*Tomasz Drabowicz*

### **A Report from the Polish Conference "Active Social Policy from the Point of View of Social Europe".**

On 21–22 September 2006, once again from the initiative of Krzysztof Piątek, there was a meeting in Toruń of representatives of vari-

ous disciplines linked with the issues of social policy and social service. The conference was an opportunity to exchange experiences and views and to analyze critically the current state of Polish social policy, which is facing not only the challenges imposed by the European Union, but also the ones that come into being with the dynamic development of the world.

The plenary session that opened the conference consisted of four presentations that prepared the background for the following discussions and speeches. Even though the titles of the plenary presentations seemed very promising, the speeches did not cross beyond providing the subject, theoretical, or even ideological scheme for the commencing debate. Julian Auleytner did not give an unequivocal answer (impossible, perhaps, in the present socio-political situation of Poland) to the question, "Is Poland a welfare State?," Katarzyna Głąbicka, describing "the future of European Social Space" presented theoretical visions of countries of wealth in Europe. Analogically, a slight interpretative lack was sensed in the presentation of Jolanta Grotowska-Leder, who showed in numbers and per cents the state of "unemployment of Polish youth from the point of view of the European Union". Krzysztof Frysztacki presented "the main dilemmas and directions of development in social America" in a less report-like manner, pointing at, among others, the possibilities resulting from finding space for social policy among such currents as "individualism" on the one hand and "solidarity" on the other; in addition, he underlined that defining America as "social", not "welfare" is not only a term, but a terminology trait.

For some time now, we have observed in the discourse of social policy the promotion of an idea to make use of the "benefits" of social

economy in solving various social problems. The so-called “third method” – a field method of social work, is, according to theoreticians, supposed to give quite considerable chances of fighting social exclusion, unemployment, pauperization, etc. The image of activating social capital, not only in theoretical debate, but in practice as well, in specific local communities, in coping with specific social problems, was shown in the presentations in the next session, entitled “Faces of Active Social Policy”. The speeches of Małgorzata Baron-Wiaterek and Krystyna Faliszek reminded us that the role of local administration cannot be underestimated in the creation of local social policy. The presentations of Izabela Mandel, Maria Pierzchalska and a collective presentation on the subject “Use of Instruments Activating the Unemployed on the Lower Silesia Job Market” emphasized the potential (the social capital – as the driving force of specific actions) that can be excavated as a result of building the foundations of a citizen society, enforcing specific social initiatives and mobilizing the beneficiaries of social help themselves to active involvement in the life of their authority districts. Jolanta Borek presents a particular case study of social work through activation, showing what barriers and challenges in this respect we encounter in the world of the disabled. Dobroniega Trawkowska presented from the perspective of her long practice in teaching social workers the idea of activating people who are sentenced to marginalization, and other challenges that current social work faces. Dawid Bunikowski pushed the challenges for social policy even further searching in the complex social service for a context to solve such controversial moral and legal issues as e.g. euthanasia.

In a parallel session, devoted to “Faces of the Current Social Problems”, numerous plots

and so-called detailed social issues were present. The present social problems, from the perspective of II Polish Republic, were discussed by Lech Kościelak. Wojciech Nagel pointed at the possibility of the demographic reserve fund as an instrument to stimulate risk in retirement insurances. The unexploited potential of the term “integration” as the basic aim of social policy was presented by Katarzyna Szymańska-Zybertowicz on the example of immigration policy. Three speeches focused on the issues of employment. There was Aleksandra Bronk, who presented the social dilemmas connected with flexible forms of employment; Sabina Bieniecka, who defined the possibilities and limitations of the third sector as a place of professional activation, and Małgorzata Podogrodzka who analyzed the problem of illegal employment in the context of social exclusion. There were also presentations of the current situation of social workers (Tadeusz Kamiński) and the clients of social help (Jerzy Bielec).

On the second day, the morning session was devoted to the social face of Europe. The presentation were focused around the summary of the experiences of researchers and practitioners so far in the area of the initiatives undertaken in Poland that use the European Union funds and the “new” instruments of Polish social policy (such as the acts on social employment, activity to public benefit, or voluntary work). The perspectives and barriers in implementing the European Social Fund were presented by Mirosław Grewiński, and practical experience in this respect – Krystyna Dowgiałło; similar reflection referring to the initiative of the EU programme EQUAL on the example of social employment of women was given by Magdalena Bergmann. Monika Sot presented the perspectives of economic