Research Agenda on Families and Family Wellbeing for Europe

Final Report

Prepared by

Marina Rupp, Loreen Beier, Anna Dechant, Christian Haag

State Institute for Family Research at the University of Bamberg (ifb)

On behalf of FAMILYPLATFORM

(supported by Dirk Hofäcker, Lena Friedrich, Kimmo Jokinen, Karin Wall, Matthias Euteneuer and Uwe Uhlendorff)

FAMILYPLATFORM

info@familyplatform.eu

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Preface

About this report

This report is the final outcome of FAMILYPLATFORM and the result of the encounter between more than 170 experts and stakeholders from all over Europe and beyond, creating a lively think tank on family issues. It summarises important policy questions, research gaps and research issues that were highlighted during the 18 months of working together closely within FAMILYPLATFORM. A series of societal challenges for families, family-related policy and research have been identified through the work of FAMILYPLATFORM. Based on these crucial societal challenges, seven important research areas are outlined in this report:

- Family Policy
- Care
- Life Course and Transitions
- Doing Family
- Migration and Mobility
- Inequalities and Insecurities
- Media and New Information Technologies.

In each research area vital research questions are identified, combined with general remarks on methodological issues and approaches. Altogether, these challenges, research areas and methodological issues are building a research roadmap for the European Union for the years ahead. The realisation of this research roadmap could help policy makers to meet future societal challenges and to improve the wellbeing of families.

By highlighting outlines of upcoming societal challenges, future research areas and methodological approaches the research agenda contributes to the future EU research work programme (7th and 8th Framework Programme). Although it is a *European* research agenda, its impact should not be limited to the European-funded research level: the agenda also contains a variety of recommendations for establishing and refining research programmes at the national and regional levels.

Furthermore, this report refers to policy makers who are active in the field of social and family policy. They will find core questions and issues that will be important in the upcoming years for the improvement of everyday family life, the wellbeing of families and children, gender equality, the reconciliation of work and family life, and the demographic development in Europe.

But this report is addressed not only to policy makers, organisers and decision-makers of research programmes but also to researchers themselves. They will find information on crucial research questions and research gaps as well as methodological advice. For them the research agenda provides a wide-ranging pool of research ideas and approaches. It could be used as a starting point for varied research projects at the European, national and local levels.

Last but not least, this report is of importance for civil society organisations active in the field of family and family policies, as it provides a scientific foundation for policy activities.

What is FAMILYPLATFORM?

FAMILYPLATFORM is a so-called "social platform on research for families and family policy". It was funded by the European Union's 7th Framework Programme (Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities 2009) for 18 months (October 2009 – March 2011). The main purpose of FAMILYPLATFORM as a co-ordination and support action for the European Commission was to build up a social platform involving a wide range of stakeholder representatives including policy makers and family and welfare organisations, grassroot initiatives and researchers. The idea was to match different stakeholder groups and their points of view, to identify vital societal challenges regarding the future wellbeing of families, and to derive key policy questions from interactions between stakeholders. The final objective of FAMILYPLATFORM was to launch a European agenda for research on the family, to enable policy makers and others to cope with the challenges families are facing in Europe.

Overall, more than 170 civil society representatives, policy makers, and scientific experts were involved in the work of FAMILYPLATFORM. Encouraging diverse societal groups to share and negotiate their sometimes quite contradictory points of view and thoughts, and ensuring an effective working process in managing all of the tasks of the project, was an undeniable challenge. In overall terms there has been very fruitful and productive co-operation between these diverse groups, resulting in a great deal of shared learning for everyone involved.

Background: Why was FAMILYPLATFORM necessary?

European societies have undergone profound changes in family life over the last few decades. Putting it simply, these changes involve diversification of family forms over the life course of family members. As an integral part of this process, families are developing different ways of dealing with parenthood, child rearing and work-life balance. One result of this is that there is a lack of suitable models of how to best reconcile work and family life. Establishing a fulfilling family life is, therefore, much more of a personal challenge for each family member, and for the family unit as a whole.

In this context, there are considerable cross-national differences between European societies as regards the living conditions of families. Legal systems, welfare structures, educational systems, health-care provision and economic policies vary from country to country, and the structures of families and trends in these areas are therefore quite diverse.

Social innovations and evidence-based policies are thus needed to cope with the new plurality of family life. In doing so, they should also tackle the decrease in fertility rates all over Europe, the increases in the rates of divorce and separation of families, and changes in gender roles. Family-related issues are an important factor in the formulation of national social policies. Family policy is not an explicit area of competence for the European Union, although many family-related issues are

on the European agenda. These are dealt with using the open method of co-ordination by EU Member States. They include gender equality, reconciliation of work and family life, intergenerational solidarity, life-long learning, and the expansion of day-care systems for children.

The European Union took an important step towards strengthening family-related policy issues with the establishment of the European Alliance for Families in 2007. Although this has given greater prominence to family-related issues, there is a continuing need for further research on family issues to enhance policy strategies and improve the wellbeing of families. A first step in this direction was taken by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions: the Second European Quality of Life Survey[1], which focuses on the theme of family life and work, looking mainly at how to achieve a better balance between work and family life across Europe. Furthermore, several research projects on family issues have been initiated and funded by the European Commission, many of them within the Seventh Framework Programme, which includes FAMILYPLATFORM in its roster. FAMILYPLATFORM was established to take stock of recent research, to review the major trends and critical findings and to negotiate crucial issues for future research programmes with a wide range of stakeholder representatives and policy makers.

The four steps to the research agenda

This final deliverable of FAMILYPLATFORM – constituting the fourth and final step – sums up the results of three preceding steps. Overall, FAMILYPLATFORM focused on four areas:

1) State of the art of existing research on family life and family policies (Kuronen, 2010);
2) Focused critical review of existing research (Wall *et al*., 2010c);
3) Key policy questions and research issues focused on wellbeing of families (Kapella *et al*., 2011);
4) The European research agenda.

1) State of the art of existing research on family life and family policies. The state of our knowledge on families has only partially kept up with changes in society, family life and its global frameworks. In general this is due to the great variety of family life and its legal and social contexts. In addition, European policies and research are currently confronted with a situation in which some aspects of family life are thoroughly researched, while others (such as rare family types) remain largely unexplored. In addition, the intensity of research covering specific themes varies between European countries and regions. For these reasons, the first objective of FAMILYPLATFORM was to establish an empirical foundation for further discussion and decisions by working out the current state of family research and bringing recent and relevant research findings together. An overview of policies and social systems was also compiled to help give shape to the contextual framework of family life.

As family is related to nearly every area of society, FAMILYPLATFORM had to define specific areas of major concern in order to have a concrete starting point. The following (so-called) 'Existential Fields' were taken into account when outlining the current state of family research, identifying significant

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[1] See http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef0852.htm.

trends and differences between countries, discovering research gaps, and analysing methodological problems:

1) Family structures and family forms in the European Union;
2) Family developmental processes;
3) State family policies;
4) Family living environments;
5) Family management;
6) Social care and social services;
7) Social inequality and diversity of families;
8) Media, communication and information technologies.

Different expert groups worked on the Existential Field reports, summarising the state of the art of European research in each field. Each report provides an overview of the focal points of research over the last few decades, highlights trends (in family life as well as family policies) and points out gaps in existing research. These reports formed the basis for intense discussion in workshops in Jyväskylä (Finland) in February 2010. The first deliverable of FAMILYPLATFORM, "Research on Families and Family Policies in Europe – State of The Art" by Marjo Kuronen (2010), is based on this work and provides an in-depth overview of existing family research in Europe.

2) Focused critical review of existing research. One of the special characteristics of FAMILYPLATFORM, which made it a social platform rather than a 'simple' research project, was the involvement of a wide range of stakeholder representatives. For the critical review of the state of the art it was essential to include the views of representatives of family associations as well as policy makers and social partners. Participants in the critical reviewing process worked out key policy questions and appropriate research perspectives. This was a very fruitful step in the work of the platform, as these groups seldom meet up to engage with each other's thoughts, understandings and agendas. By critically reviewing the current state of research from different perspectives, future challenges for family research and important research gaps were highlighted and key policy questions for future Europe identified.

To encourage critical comments and statements from a wide range of experts and stakeholders, two discussion forums were established. First, a conference took place in Lisbon in the spring of 2010. This conference was not only an opportunity for participants to hear statements on the state of the art reports, but also saw eight focussed discussion groups and eight workshops take place. More than 120 participants were engaged in lively and open discussions, providing the platform with recommendations for future research and key policy questions, each discussion being documented by a rapporteur[2]. The conference in Lisbon was thus a milestone in the work of FAMILYPLATFORM. In addition, the internet platform opened up further possibilities for discussion and involvement of stakeholders who were unable to attend the conference. Its design provided an opportunity to ask

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[2] All of the statements and rapporteur reports are currently available for download from the FAMILYPLATFORM website (http://www.familyplatform.eu).

questions, contact researchers, and most importantly to add critical statements or new ideas online. In the second deliverable of FAMILYPLATFORM, Karin Wall, Mafalda Leitão and Vasco Ramos present the major findings of this stage of the work (Wall *et al.*, 2010c).

3) Key policy questions and research issues focused on the wellbeing of families. One of the main findings of FAMILYPLATFORM is that the concept of 'wellbeing of families' should be considered an important long-term compass for implementing research and developing policy. To help achieve this, the 'foresight approach' was used. It enabled a group of experts and stakeholder representatives to generate common visions for the future and to explore strategies for dealing with their possible consequences. In the spring and summer of 2010, more than 35 researchers, policy makers and representatives of civil society organisations met to discuss and develop four future scenarios using this approach. The participants worked out the preconditions and facets of wellbeing for families, described factors that will have a strong impact on families in the future, and tried to foresee future developments that challenge the wellbeing of families. Based on these assumptions, four crucial future welfare societies were outlined, and more than 16 family narratives sketched out. By elucidating these scenarios, policies to support the wellbeing of families were defined, and areas for future research to back such policies highlighted.

Both the method and the results of this procedure are summarised in a third deliverable of FAMILYPLATFORM "Future Scenarios" by Olaf Kapella and Anne-Claire de Liedekerke (Kapella *et al.*, 2011). The diagram shows an overview of the three preliminary steps towards the research agenda.

Existential field expert reports
- Family structures & family forms
- Family developmental processes
- State family policies
- Family living environments
- Family management
- Social care & social services
- Social inequality and diversity of families
- Media, communication and information technologies

Expert Group Conference

State of the Art of Research on Family Life and Family Policies in Europe

Key policy questions
- Transitions to adulthood
- Motherhood & fatherhood
- Ageing & social policy
- Changes in conjugal life
- Relationships and wellbeing
- Gender equality
- Reconciling work & care for young children
- Reaching out to families

Focused Critical Review of Existing Research by Stakeholders

Critical Review of Existing Research in Europe

Family wellbeing in future Europe
- Foresight approach
- Preconditions and facets of family wellbeing
- Societal drivers
- Future challenges for the wellbeing of families

Scenario Workshops

Foresight Report: Facets and Preconditions of Wellbeing of Families

European Research Agenda

Diagram 1. The road to the research agenda

4) The European Research Agenda. As shown in Diagram 1, the European Research Agenda brings together all of the previous steps, distilling the key findings and concerns of stakeholders into an

agenda for research on families for the European Union and its Member States. Taking all the prior stages of work into account, it outlines the main societal trends, challenges for policy and main areas for future research, but also looks at methodological issues. It can be seen as a roadmap for future research on families, providing not only smaller topics for research, but also societal challenges that need to be tackled using a multidisciplinary and multi-research method approach.

To enable stakeholder involvement in this final stage of the work, a conference took place in Brussels where over 120 representatives from civil society organisations, policy and scientific backgrounds gave their input on a preliminary outline of the agenda.

Special Thanks

We want to thank everybody involved in the process for sharing their thoughts and ideas, for their commitment and their contributions to the project. Special thanks go to all of the members of the Advisory Board, and also to the External Experts and the representatives from family organisations for their valuable input. In addition, we would like to thank Elie Faroult, whose experience helped to guide the future scenarios. Finally, we would like to thank Pierre Valette and Marc Goffart from the European Commission (Directorate-General Research & Innovation) for their extensive advice at every important stage of our work, and also Ralf Jacob (Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities) for his support throughout the project.

Uwe Uhlendorff (Overall Co-ordinator), Marina Rupp (Scientific Co-ordinator), Matthias Euteneuer (Administrative Co-ordinator)

This report is based on contributions as follows:

State of the Art of Research on Family and Family Policies in Europe

Research on Families and Family Policies in Europe: State of the Art http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27686	Marjo Kuronen Family Research Centre, University of Jyväskylä
1. Family Structures and Family Forms in the European Union: An overview of major trends and developments http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27689	Loreen Beier, Dr. Dirk Hofäcker, Elisa Marchese, Dr. Marina Rupp State Institute for Family Research, University of Bamberg
2a. Family Developmental Processes http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27690	Carmen Leccardi, Miriam Perego Department of Sociology and Social Research, University of Milan-Bicocca

2b. Transitions into Parenthood

Barbara Stauber
Institute for Educational Sciences, University of Tübingen

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27691

3. Major Trends of State Family Policies in Europe

Sonja Blum, Christiane Rille-Pfeiffer
Austrian Institute for Family Studies, University of Vienna

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27692

4a. Family and Living Environment: Economic Situation, Education Levels, Employment and Physical Living Environment

Epp Reiska, Ellu Saar, Karl Viilmann
Institute of International and Social Studies, Tallinn University

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27693

4b. Local politics: Programmes and best practice model

Francesco Belletti, Lorenza Rebuzzini
Forum delle Associazioni Familiari

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27694

5. Patterns and Trends of Family Management in the European Union

Zsuzsa Blaskó, Veronika Herche
Demographic Research Institute, Budapest

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27695

6a. Social Care and Social Services - Literature review on existing European comparative research

Marjo Kuronen, Kimmo Jokinen , Teppo Kröger
Family Research Centre & Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy /Social Work, University of Jyväskylä

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27696

6b. The Professional Standards of Care Workers – The Development of Standards for Social Work and Social Care Services for Families

Aila-Leena Matthies
Kokkola University Consortium (Finland)

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27697

7. Social Inequality and Diversity of Families

Karin Wall, Mafalda Leitão, Vasco Ramos
Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27698

8. Media, communication and information technologies in the European family

Sonia Livingstone, Ranjana Das
Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science

Appendix to the Report – Special Focus Pieces

Myria Georgiou, Leslie Haddon, Ellen Helsper, Yinhan Wang
Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27699

9. Civil Society Perspective: Family Organisations at the Local, National, European and Global Level – Three Case Studies

Linden Farrer, Lorenza Rebuzzini, Liverani Aurora, Anne-Claire de Liedekerke, Jill Donnelly, Marie-Liesse Mandula
Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union, Forum delle Associazioni Familiari, World Movement of Mothers Europe

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27703

Critical Review of the Existing Research on Families

Critical Review of Research on Families and Family Policies in Europe

Karin Wall, Mafalda Leitão, Vasco Ramos, Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27687

Realities of Mothers in Europe

Joan Stevens, Julie de Bergeyck, Anne-Claire de Liedekerke
World Movement of Mothers Europe

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27685

Future of Families

Foresight Report: Facets and Preconditions of Wellbeing of Families

Olaf Kapella, Anne-Claire de Liedekerke, Julie de Bergeyck
Austrian Institute for Family Studies, World Movement of Mothers Europe

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27688

I Executive summary

The objective of the FAMILYPLATFORM was to develop relevant topics for future research. It was a process which involved selected scientists and representatives of three European family associations (forming the "consortium" of FAMILYPLATFORM), together with a permanent advisory board as well as a large group of stakeholders and policy makers.

First the scientists gathered the state of the art in eight scientific areas (the so-called 'existential fields'), discussed subsequently in the plenary. Additionally, the group was working on foresight scenarios in order to get a wider view of future developments and challenges. All these findings were subjected to a critical review by all participants and stakeholders. The results of these reports and of the meetings both constitute the input for the research agenda, which is meant to show future societal and policy challenges as well as important fields for future research. The topics of the research agenda were selected and discussed in a meeting of the FAMILPLATFORM consortium and at a conference, in which about 120 stakeholders, policy makers and scientists were involved.

1   Main societal trends

FAMILYPLATFORM worked out important general trends affecting all family-related fields, which are also mutually dependent:

- The first trend is the effects of *globalisation* combined with *individualisation.* Increasing plurality, chances of and demand on flexibility and mobility and, as a result of the latter, rising plural locality as well, increasing uncertainty (especially concerning employment and workplace) as well as a high degree of interconnectedness through the new information technologies are all consequences of worldwide globalisation. These tendencies partly lead to a growing gap between those who can deal with the demands of globalisation and those who cannot. This produces new forms of inequality and a higher risk of social exclusion and financial deprivation.

- The second trend is *demographic change.* It comprises delayed timing of family formation and fertility rates decreasing to below the level required to sustain the population, and consequently societal ageing, to which higher life expectancy is a further contributory factor. Both lead to a changing age-dependency ratio, which affects social security systems.

- Another significant development is rising *education levels* and growth of *female employment*. Both trends are strongly tied in with demographic development, and they shape *gender roles*. So for each of the following research areas it is important to bear in mind that there are huge gender disparities.

These major trends include a variety of ways in which the family is affected, for example by rising insecurity in many areas of life and certain phases of family life-courses.

A high proportion of young people already enjoy long-term education, and the target of the EU is to raise the percentage of third-level (higher) education up to at least 40 per cent. This affects family in different ways, for example:

- There is a *delay in family formation*. The question here is how to support young (potential) parents so that they feel secure enough to have their desired number of children. Young people today have to go through several important transitions – especially starting a career and starting a family – within a short time span. This leads to the *so-called rush hour of life,* especially for women, who are still the main care-givers.

- The problem of *reconciliation of work and family* is one reason for the lower fertility of highly educated women. In this context, it is important to consider not only mothers, but fathers as well. In part, they want to change their role in the family system and become a parent with corresponding rights and duties. Working conditions, care facilities and the whole environment are often not considered family-friendly. The division of paid and unpaid work in particular leads to large gaps in gender equality.

- Due to demographic change, it is also important to consider *care* as an important issue for the EU and all member countries. Families are responsible for the growing demand for care, especially of elderly members, while time and support run short.

- *Mobility* of European workers is an important goal of the European Union. Nevertheless, the majority of *migrants* come from non-EU countries and often have different cultural backgrounds. Immigration has an impact on the composition of the population in the receiving society as it is confronted with foreign cultures. Immigration raises questions on the successful integration of the migrant population: integration does not only mean assimilation, but also tolerance towards cultural variety.

In general, the increasing use of *new information technologies and media-related* opportunities and risks creates demands for new forms of education and skills, as well as new opportunities and new forms of inequality.

2   Challenges for policy and research

Several policy measures are necessary and have to be developed further to deal with the upcoming societal challenges identified by FAMILYPLATFORM. Based on the scientific knowledge compiled within the project (Kuronen, 2010) and the consultation of over 120 stakeholders from different societal backgrounds at the Critical Review Conference (Wall *et al.*, 2010c), topics of major relevance have been identified within the very wide range of family-related policy issues discussed during all conferences and meetings:

- The first major societal challenge Europe is facing in the field of families and family policies is how to provide *sustainable and inclusive care arrangements* that match the growing care needs of the European population. Research and policies in this field have to consider different areas: childcare, and care of elderly or disabled people. It is important to take into account the perspective of both the care receivers and the care-givers for a better integration of different policies influencing care arrangements. For *childcare,* it is important to create policies that help parents to realise their preferred arrangement – with a combination of care provisions, high quality external childcare, leave schemes, adequate working time arrangements, self-determined flexibility in working hours and financial support. It is very important to create these possibilities equally for women and men. Care *for elderly or disabled persons* may take place within or outside the family, and both situations need special attention.

- For care within the family, leave schemes and remuneration would facilitate care-taking. To relieve the burden on family carers, a high quality system of external care, investments in retirement housing and palliative care are needed. Care-givers and their special needs have to be considered as well. Women provide care for all relatives more frequently and accept losses to their incomes and future pensions as the price of their commitment to care. The great majority of care personnel is female, and some have a migration background. Policies providing social protection for carers (regardless of whether they are family members or external helpers) are therefore indispensable. In sum, different care policies influencing care

need to be integrated. One way of reconciling work and care in the life course might be a social innovation of 'time care insurance' or a 'time credit account', including an amount of years that can be taken to care for others.

- Another major challenge relates to *doing family,* which is closely connected to the question of *gender equality*. The management of families has become more complex and ambitious as, for example, different time schemes have to be organised. Doing family is connected to questions of how families divide or *reconcile paid and unpaid work.* As gender equality is one goal of the European Union, policies should address this problem, for example by means of labour market regulations (legislation on part-time work, flexible working hours, well-paid leave schemes, life-long learning) and incentives for companies (e.g. promotion of a family-friendly label). It seems to be especially important to encourage men to participate more in unpaid work and to render these tasks more attractive. It is clearly important to integrate different policies in order to achieve the goals of supporting all family forms and of achieving greater gender equality.

- It is important to bear in mind that due to more *dynamics in family life* and increased freedom of choice there is a *growing variety of family forms* besides the so called standard nuclear family, for example single-parent families, same-sex families, stepfamilies, patchwork families and other forms. Each of them has special issues and needs. Policies have to be responsive to this, respect different living arrangements, and support all of them to avoid inequalities. Special attention in designing policies has to be given to families of *minorities*.

- This is also true for all stages of the *life course and all transitions in family life,* so policies have to react to the pace of change, and should facilitate it. Significant transitions in the life course are those to adulthood and to parenthood. With regard to the former, policies (e.g. on education or employment) and institutional settings need to be reconsidered. This is important because the *transition to adulthood* influences the *process of family formation*. More policies supporting young adults in starting a family are needed, because the timing of family formation is related to the average number of children and it is thus important for demographic change. One way to ease difficult or unexpected transitions and life stages and to give support to families could be the implementation of 'mediation and counselling centres'. To achieve the goal of raising fertility rates, higher and longer parental benefits seem to be one way of enabling people to decide to have more children.

- Spatial *mobility* is an important issue in Europe as its citizens have the right to move freely from one member state to another to take up employment and settle down. Additionally, there is a significant flow of migration from non-EU countries, and there are *different forms of migration*: long or short-term migration, within a country or beyond borders, commuting, circular migration, seasonal migration and other forms of movement. Migrants and mobile people are a very heterogeneous group and need differentiated legislation. Until now, policies have treated people as individuals who are not embedded in social contexts. Regardless of whether migration is voluntary or involuntary, questions of integration and tolerance arise. It is obvious that there are differences between various immigrant groups as far as participation in the host society is concerned, for example with regard to the educational attainment of children or social exclusion of the family. Policies have to cope with this problem if they want to ensure the wellbeing of the whole family and especially that of the children.

- *Inequality and material deprivation* are important issues not only for migrant or mobile families but for all, because there is growing polarisation between families with very low and very high incomes. In particular, *child poverty* has to be avoided to ensure the wellbeing of children. Income deprivation is an important starting-point, but the resulting loss of dignity,

inability to gain access to suitable housing, education, health services, nutrition and other relevant opportunities in society have to be kept in focus as well. As material deprivation is often 'inherited', policies supporting all generations are essential. Financial help is necessary but not sufficient, as it has to be accompanied by empowerment.

- Families are not always a secure place. *Violence* occurs in some families in psychological, economic, physical or sexual form. It is to be found between partners, parents and their dependent children, or elderly parents and their adult children. It is often assumed that victims are female, but men are affected as well. Policies have to provide support for all victims, regardless of their gender and age.

- *Media and new technologies* supply both opportunities and challenges to families. New information and communication technologies such as the internet allow people to stay in contact with relatives and friends living far away. They also entail a number of risks. Parents are often ignorant of the dangers, or do not know how to protect their children, as they have not grown up with these technologies themselves. Here, support for the parents, more information, and family (life) education and counselling are necessary, and the question of availability of relevant media has to be discussed. Another aspect related to media is the representation of families and family life and the question of how this affects the attitudes, values and behaviour of (young) people.

- *Family (life) education and empowerment* in general is needed to help parents guide and educate their children. Therefore, access to services supporting parents has to be expanded and special projects should be promoted further in order to empower parents. A sustainable strategy for family education is accompanied by financial support and the empowerment of parents through non-material resources.

One way of ensuring that all these topics are considered properly from the viewpoint of families is *family mainstreaming.* With an international plan of action, families' points of view could be integrated into overall policy making. This would lead to a reconsideration of all policy fields with regard to how they affect families and family members: men, women, children and the elderly, in all stages of the life-course.

3   Main research issues

Some general remarks on methods are included here before describing the main research fields appropriate to the above-mentioned societal challenges.

General requirements for information and methods

In general, there is a need for more comparable data that can be merged at the European level, because existing research allowing for a comparison at the EU level is not sufficiently deep and differentiated. This also means including all nations of the EU27 in future research when addressing basic issues. Secondly, there is a need for more data at the national level, especially for the new member states, and ideally for candidate states too. We need basic statistics at the European level for the broad variety of the population, but especially for the rarer family forms and, also, with respect to national and cultural differences. This means going beyond the prevalent household concept and collecting data at the individual, family and network level, especially in order to get more insight into relationships and support networks.

It is necessary to discuss existing indicators and find new ones that describe the situations of families and countries more precisely, addressing aspects such as living standards (beyond income-based

indicators or GDP), education and relationships. Furthermore, the development of advanced wellbeing indicators is needed to describe the reality of family forms, including the views of all members on, for example, dissolution of the family, the family as a network, and intergenerational relationships. Once again, children's views need to be incorporated. An interdisciplinary exchange of knowledge between different sciences is necessary to obtain comparable information of a wider thematic and methodological range.

A strict application of common indicators is very important and should be made a precondition when issuing calls for studies at the EU or national level. Thus, we need an inventory of advanced methodological approaches that is seen as a common standard. To realise these aims some kind of institution is needed to provide them.

Current research is inherently static. As the pace of change in family life increases, lack of information on development processes becomes more of a problem. In order to progress towards a general understanding of family, and in particular to understand its dynamics, more differentiated qualitative research (e.g. into specific family forms, regions) and longitudinal studies addressing transitions and their effects are needed. Exploratory studies could sharpen our understanding of rare family forms and how they live, including children's views. So there is a need for advanced and creative methods addressing the diversity of family life. In this context, further development and application of interdisciplinary methods and multi-method mixes are required.

Research on social innovations has to be improved. For many of the challenges demonstrated above we still have a rather limited range of ideas on how to solve them – for example what future care arrangements will look like. Here we have to search for new models that can be scientifically monitored. To avoid redundancies, concrete examples of methodological approaches will be given in the following discussion of the different research issues.

Research and family policies

Research on family policies is important because it gives us basic information on the different backgrounds of family life in Europe, and these are surely major influences on the planning and managing of family life. The availability and design of leave schemes, for example, influences the timing of parenting and the participation of parents in the labour market. Research on the following issues would enable more informed policy making:

Monitoring. A first research step is to address and monitor family policies and related policy fields. This is a basic need to achieve an overview of family-related frameworks, laws and rules throughout the European nations and at every level (European, national, sub-national/regional, maybe similar to the idea of MIPEX). A comparison of national policies may also help to assess the outcome of policy measures. Additionally, the intentions and outlines of the EU need to be summed up to compare its goals with the prevailing situation in the member states. As a third step, developmental processes should be examined in order to understand cultural backgrounds. Existing typologies of social security schemes in EU countries have to be reconsidered, and the different types of institutional frameworks in the EU need to be analysed. Comparative studies could show effects of stability and changes in family policy regimes. In sum, consensual criteria have to be found to enable us to make clearer comparisons of data between the member states (indicators on family forms, relationships, poverty, and education) and categories of policy interventions and measures.

Evaluation. Against the background of the demand for family mainstreaming, evaluation of policies has been called for in almost every political field and research area as well as at every level. Therefore, we need a concept of what constitutes 'family policy' and must take into account that family policies are affected by other policy fields. Hence, evaluation should not focus on isolated measures but study complex and interrelated systems of regulations. The impact of policies in one

field could be diminished or thwarted by those in other policy domains. At the practical level, a decision needs to be made about what kind of evaluation is preferred and appropriate. Formative evaluation is appropriate for new or renewed policies (or strategies). Conclusions will be drawn and implemented during the tenure of the project. Formative evaluation allows us to react fairly quickly, despite the risk of over- or underestimating effects because of short observation periods. It is appropriate for smaller, limited strategies, rather than for broader policies. Another form of evaluation is summative evaluation, which tests outputs. In evaluations of this type we look at stated policy objectives and try to find measurements telling us whether the objectives have been reached, and what other effects have been observed. This approach relies on the definition of concrete aims. Summative evaluation requires a certain amount of time. This is a disadvantage, because policy is not able to react quickly to unintended effects. The benefit of this method, however, is that the results should be clearer and more reliable.

Family education. Family life has become ever more varied and dynamic as a result of societal changes. At the same time, demands made on parents in connection with the upbringing and education of their children have increased greatly. One example is the importance of encouraging children's school performance. Individual family biographies vary a great deal, particularly in terms of their educational background and (financial) resources. One central and action-oriented concern is what support each family needs, depending on their specific context or the transition they are in, and how they can make best use of this support. There is little empirical evidence or data available on the accuracy or fitness of support and its acceptance by specific types of families. It is crucial to include the family-specific, demand-oriented point of view derived from a sensitive approach when developing criteria and content for family information. This means that initial exploratory studies should be carried out to evaluate differences in the population. Thereafter, standardised measures can be used to obtain data from a larger sample.

Family organisations. In the context of research on family policies, it is essential to understand how family organisations on different levels can contribute to the policy process. In some fields, e.g. family education, politicians and organisations are often working side by side. In others, we find a lack of participation. We therefore need a better understanding of how family organisations can contribute, by demonstrating what families need through research on how such processes are organised and what methods they use to gather knowledge on a day to day basis. Innovative methods of participation have to be found and tested.

Care

The subject of care was the topic of greatest concern, as rising life expectancy, improvements in health care and the high costs of health systems have lead to changing demands for care.

Care relations involve different actors, some of whom are drawn from within families and others who are external providers. The recipients of care have a wide range of individual needs and abilities, and they are influenced by existing regulations and policy schemes. Care is usually seen as practical help, but can also be regarded as more general assistance, as in providing an environment to live in as well as ensuring general wellbeing.

Due to the rising number of frail elderly people, care deficits are likely to increase. Changing norms and role models have lead to different understandings of family, work, and life responsibilities. With changes in family formation and a rising diversity of family patterns, family care models are also likely to become more diversified throughout Europe. This development has profound effects when care needs to be managed with an outdated ideal of a family in mind. Global developments continue to influence families, who have to cope with high uncertainty on labour markets and governments making adjustments to national economies in response to global crises.

To understand the various aspects of the importance of care, it is necessary to distinguish between different types of care recipients and, also, to consider the differences between care recipients and care providers. Research on the following issues would enable more informed policy making:

- *Comparison of current solutions.* One step for future research could be to *compare the current situation* of care provision in each member state and analyse what makes each national policy distinct. In order to reflect the complexity of family constellations, it is necessary to distinguish between different types of care recipients: (1) children, (2) the elderly, (3) those who are (temporarily) ill or otherwise in need of assistance or (4) persons with disabilities. It is necessary to evaluate to what extent welfare states push families towards providing care and to what extent they support them. This first part also includes an evaluation of the prevailing attitudes towards care and to what extent the responsibility for providing care falls upon the family.

- *Views and demands of recipients and providers.* Another major research issue is the examination of the views, wishes and needs of care recipients and care providers. Expectations of both groups concerning the care relationship will help to plan future care schemes in accordance with the wishes of the people involved. At the same time, the decision-making process within families concerning the organisation of care relations will be of importance in assisting families in their function as care providers.

- *Children's point of view.* It should be determined, for children at different ages, how satisfied they are with their care arrangements and whether they prefer alternatives. This is a piece of information that has not been gathered at a comparative level before, and that must be differentiated according to social backgrounds and types of care arrangements. The elderly should also be asked what kind of care relation they prefer. This includes investigating their decision-making processes and their opinion about their care-givers. People suffering from (temporary) illness will be focussed on a quick recovery and re-integration into their previous life patterns. This process needs to be evaluated to find out how their illness affects the functioning of their family and how they can be supported both individually and as a family. People with disabilities often need long-term assistance. The focus should therefore be on a lifespan approach. Longitudinal measures are particularly important in relation to children and care recipients who are ill or disabled in order to capture the effects of care relations for the future course of their lives. For the elderly, a longitudinal setting would allow for a comprehensive view of the last phase of life in order to create sustainable support. Only with a profound knowledge of the process of physical and mental deterioration and related care needs can policies be devised to support both care recipients and family members who are also care providers.

- *Innovations.* In another step, exploring innovations in care could supply valuable information on how to reshape care relations within families and in co-ordination with families and professional care providers. This is true for care of the elderly as well as for other care solutions, particularly childcare. Among the new forms of care relations migrant workers, who are most prominent in care for the elderly, pose new challenges for families and nation states, in connection with the legal status of migrant carers, the affordability of care services in general, and the quality of the care provided. Furthermore, there is a need for information on the extent to which technological innovations help care-givers, and care recipients can regain independence through the use of technological appliances.

- *Future policy strategies.* The last major area for future research on care is future policy strategies for care arrangements in general. Based on the knowledge of desired care relations, policies can be adjusted to remove obstacles and support care-givers. At the same

time, the financial and economic considerations of providers of care need to be taken into account. Policy-making needs to recognise the specific environments of families, which are likely to differ not only from state to state but also according to social classes and groups.

Altogether, care is a major research area, with many cross-cutting topics that have to be taken into account. One of the most important of these is gender, as the gendered division of household duties and family activities causes an imbalance to the provision of care as a whole.

Life-course and transitions

Family life changes over the life-course. Needs and interests are therefore not stable but shifting. Although the life-course approach has become more important in the social sciences, there is a lack of research that makes use of it. At the EU level, we find comparative data mostly at the individual or household level (e.g. EUROSTAT, Eurobarometer, EU-SILC, SHARE, and GGS).

Transitions in life-course and in family life have become more complex, and some have become more frequent. For example, the forms of transition to parenthood have made family life more diverse. This raises the question of inequality of opportunities, especially with regard to the children who grow up in these families. Research on family wellbeing should follow the life-course and focus on transitions. Research on the following issues would enable more informed policy making:

Transition to parenthood. Some data on the transition to parenthood is available for Europe as a whole, for example the age of the first-born child, the desire for children and attitudes to childcare and employment. Little is known about the interplay between the development of these patterns and policy measures, e.g. the impact of different legal frameworks on timing or family form. And there is a lack of longitudinal studies on (potentially) relevant factors and observations on changing trends here. Scientific research into decisions on family formation and the resulting different family forms is necessary to address the impact of national social policies and attitudinal trends, and to compare the various measures in Europe. To achieve this, survey data relating to the various target groups is needed, ideally for all European states.

Dissolution, separation, divorce and reorganisation. The decrease in the stability of relationships is a major cause of changes in family development and in the multiplicity of family forms. FAMILYPLATFORM stressed the need for in-depth studies going beyond the existing basic data into the field of separation and divorce. Another suggestion was to develop intervention studies in order to generate ways of stabilising family relationships. The wellbeing of children is especially relevant in this context. Care and custody arrangements and particularly their impact on parent-child relationships have to be researched in detail and also from the children's point of view. A very important question addresses the development of family relationships after separation and as to how and when children can be involved in the decision-making processes. The material situation of post-divorce families and its development over time are also relevant topics.

Variety of family forms. The increased variety of family forms is based on greater tolerance of non-traditional family forms in most EU states and a higher incidence of separation. The variety of family forms implies different support needs. Thus we have to obtain more information on how pair-headed, lone-parent, homosexual, teen mother, patchwork and migrant families live, whether the parents in question are married or not, as well as on families among minorities.

Family phases. Demands on the family change according to the age of the children living in it. This also means that there are changes in parental tasks and the resources they need. Until now, research and most of the family policy measures have paid insufficient attention to these facts. We need to learn more about shifting challenges in parenting, variations in the division of labour within the

family and between family and professional services. In this context, sources of instability in the phases of family development should also be taken into account.

Transition to large families. Although there is an intimate connection between demographic development and the reduction in the size of 'large' families, research has focussed little on this question. The point is to examine what mechanisms, considerations and attitudes play a role with regard to the decision (not) to have a large family. The existence of different gender role and parenthood concepts also needs to be taken into account. Research is required to determine the influence of these concepts on fertility decisions.

Families and relationships of the elderly and the transition to the fourth age. In connection with changes in the family and longer life expectancy establishing and maintaining relationships has become significantly more important for older generations. Alongside questions of how the elderly find a partner and establish a relationship, it is also important (from the point of view of sociology of the family) to understand how intergenerational relationships develop as a result. Local ´skills markets´ could provide support for families by accessing the experience and time resources of the elderly and integrating them in the community.

With regard to later stages of life, questions concerning the needs of the elderly - especially that of care -, and what resources are available to them, have grown in importance. The Survey for Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) shows that children are prepared to step in for their parents. Questions however arise as to whether and to what extent they are able to do so, and what arrangements they will choose or can afford.

Doing family

With regard to the social trends in modern societies described above, it has become a great task and creative challenge to manage daily life within the family. 'Doing family' does not only focus on the aim of gender equality in general but also on increasing female participation in the labour force in particular. Doing family means matching competing demands from different parts of society with family life. This becomes more important as more women and mothers take part in employment. If we take leisure activities, educational pursuits (e.g. music lessons) and further social duties (e.g. looking after elderly family members) into consideration, it is evident that family members are involved in many different tasks, and therefore follow diverse routines that are not easily harmonised.

The European objective of gender equality is, therefore, still a very long way off: women are still mainly responsible for the management of the household and care tasks. Even though the fulfilment of gender roles is vital for the personal gender identity of the partners, it can lead to dissatisfaction, overload, conflicts and frustration. A satisfying arrangement is important for the stability of partnerships and, therefore, directly and indirectly for the growth and development of the children as well.

The data available is not up to date at the EU level, and there is no comparable information for all of the member states of EU27. Another problem arises from differing approaches to and concepts of measuring unpaid work, household work and childcare. Various task areas need to be identified and defined empirically. Professional work, including additional time taken – in particular in commuting to work, training, participating in special events, etc., – must be identified and recorded precisely. In order to be able to work out how different tasks and duties are to be reconciled (or not), we need to identify at what time each task and activity is performed during the day. However, it is necessary to check what methods of data collection are appropriate on a significantly broader base. To this end, we need special research into the relative strength of the various concepts governing the collection

of data on the distribution of household chores, and investment of time within the family. Up until now, we possess concrete records (using the diary method) along with estimated time units and task participation indices. Additionally, we find that tasks are categorised differently and different data have been collected. There is, accordingly, an urgent need for unity and comparability. The amount of time invested in childcare is barely recorded, and is therefore difficult to compare. Here, too, a pattern is to be developed that differentiates between the different tasks depending on the age and needs of the children. Furthermore, it should be noted that tasks in the household and childcare are often carried out at the same time. This situation must be borne in mind when it comes to recording possible signs of overloading on the one hand, and to identify gender-related differences on the other hand. It is also necessary to capture the subjective experience of overload and stress in a differentiated way. Further methodological development is vital here too, and should be considered an interdisciplinary task.

- Comparable basic *data should be gathered in all European countries and be standardised* as far as possible. Ideally, this should be carried out on a regular basis, with a longitudinal design to follow developments. The question as to how unpaid work in general can be differentiated sufficiently poses a further significant challenge. A scientific method of resolving this question is the prerequisite for arriving at a better understanding of the importance of these tasks. This brings us to the question as to how current social security systems influence gender roles and the division of labour.

- The *reconciliation of work and family* is a central factor due to changes in gender roles, especially in relation to education and participation in the working life. It is also of immense importance for the wellbeing of family members. Since there are significant differences in the scale of support in this context within European countries (e.g. regulations on parental leave and opportunities for part-time work), it is not easy to make a general evaluation of the situation. There is a need for further research that makes it possible to collect and analyse data on employers' attitudes to the reconciliation of work and family and of concrete measures designed to support it. The results should be compared with the concrete wishes and problems of the parents. With respect to workplaces, the question is how to create flexible living arrangements that are evaluated positively and structured according to individual needs.

- Doing family changes over the life course of the family, and the internal distribution of labour has to be adjusted accordingly. It is often forgotten that new challenges and structures arise when children get older, and that it is not only the early years which generate special demands. Against this background, the *life-course perspective* is also to be kept in mind when doing family research.

- The change in gender roles has mainly taken place in attitudes and the ability of women to organise their own lives. In this context, a question emerges as to what changes have taken place on the male side. In the final analysis, a family-centred reorganisation of labour would be a potential solution to the work-life balance problem. However, the fact that *research on fathers* is still in its early stages means that it urgently needs to be developed. In this area, research is faced by numerous challenges. Next to the Europe-wide collection of data on the attitudes, practices and perceived restrictions of fathers, it is above all necessary to take into account innovative work-life balance models (e.g. support at the company or public-sector level, but also in the form of socio-political conditions). At the same time, we have to study the *mother's perspective* in similar detail.

- The *division of labour within the family from the child's point of view* is another central topic for future research. Here, two key questions arise: the first concerns the contribution of the

children to the management of everyday life; the second refers to children's ideas and wishes in relation to the solution. This should be studied at a pan-European level and be differentiated according to ethnic, regional and socio-economic conditions. Here it is a question of what tasks children carry out at what age, and to what extent. It is also a question of what areas of responsibility they are entrusted with. Answers could be found through quantitative studies of parents and children. It is more difficult to clarify the question of the psycho-social responsibilities children are burdened with.

- With regard to family relationships, a number of different aspects need to be addressed: first there is the relationship between parents, as well as between parents and their children (and, with respect to the age of the children, we have to differentiate between infants and adults). Addressing parent-child relationships, we mostly focus on the specific responsibility of parents to ensure their children's wellbeing. We need deeper insights into the nature, structures and formation of relationships and their vulnerability. These can only be derived from interdisciplinary studies of longer duration and innovative approaches. Even though there has been research into evidence of attachment between children and parents, there is still a need for more longitudinal studies that offer a deeper insight into the effects of parental absence and how to solve this problem (e.g. fostering or adoption). Another basic theme is parental absence for a longer time (e.g. single-parent families). Rare forms of parenting, like foster and adoptive families, also have to be taken into account. Additionally, we require information to understand how parents and children could be helped to cope with these situations, and how their long-term wellbeing could be ensured. Another relevant aspect is the relationships between adult children and their elderly parents. Despite the fact that real support is very important for the wellbeing of all members of the (wider) family, we need to see emotional ties as being far more relevant. Another point of interest is the relationship to and the interaction between grandparents and grandchildren, both of which are shaped by rising employment rates and mobility. Research on emotional relations as well as care giving, education and financial support is therefore important.

Migration and mobility

Mobility and migration are research areas of increasing importance. We have to distinguish migration flows between European member states and migration inflows from third country nationals, as there are major legislative differences. Many countries pursue a 'brain-gain strategy' as the economy becomes increasingly knowledge-intensive and needs more human capital than their own educational system can provide. Inequality between countries is produced if the migration flows are unbalanced. Policies encourage and seek to retain only those migrants with high potential. It is often forgotten that they may have families in the country of origin. With repatriates, it is often assumed that they are individuals. Nonetheless, they may have established a relationship and started a family and want to stay. More research into the effects of brain drain/brain gain on social inequality and family life is therefore necessary.

Against the background of increasing migration, it is essential to analyse social and demographic data on the extent and structure of immigration into and within the EU, as well as the origin, destination and motivation of migrants. Currently it is hard to compare data on migration flows, as different *measurements and concepts* are used in the EU countries. Regulation (EC) No 862/2007A is a step towards the harmonisation of measures, yet the data collected is still not sufficient and detailed enough to answer all important research questions.

Research on migration of *third-country nationals* is closely linked to *integration*. Regardless of the differences in existing definitions, the concept is mainly understood as the process of incorporating

new populations into the existing social structures of the host society. From the point of view of sociology, integration would mean a long-lasting, dynamic and complex process that neutralises social exclusion or separation. The host society has to meet certain conditions if it is to provide a good foundation for this process. Assimilation, diversity or exclusion are potential alternatives. Research on integration focuses on the individual level, often failing to see the family as a research object, and there are also gaps in certain subjective aspects of integration.

- *Migrant families* and their special needs have not been an explicit object of European research studies so far. Therefore, it is not known whether migrant family structures (e.g. family forms or intergenerational relationships) resemble those of their home country or those of the receiving country. Furthermore, it is still unknown how these structures change with the migrant generations, and if there are differences between migrant groups or EU countries. Binational families seem to be less researched, even though their potential cultural differences may be important for their family life and family decisions. A Europe-wide survey study is required to research these aspects. At least the largest migrant groups in each European country should be interviewed. A panel study design would reveal changes over time. This is especially helpful for comparing differences in the needs of newly arrived immigrant families, as well as their needs after they have lived in a country for a longer period of time and are integrated more into the receiving society.

- *Family resources* are factors affecting integration, but have not been studied in detail so far. Existing studies are mostly quantitative. It is important to focus on the causal relationships between various factors and the process of integration. This could best be covered by a qualitative identification of family resources that promote or hinder the integration of individual family members. Financial, emotional or moral support could be essential factors for their wellbeing. Additionally, ethnic or religious attitudes have to be studied.

- *Acceptance of migrants* in the receiving society might differ between social or ethnic groups. It is necessary to analyse how immigrants from different countries of origin are perceived in different member states, and how this is affected by various factors such as the proportion of non-nationals, media representation, historical phenomena or other factors. This knowledge would help to improve the image of non-natives and create a helpful climate for integration.

- *Intra-European migration* is affected significantly by education. This is especially true for higher education. The European Union supports international lifelong learning with several programmes for different stages in the life-course: Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, and Grundtvig. There is no study comparing educational mobility in different European countries. Such an analysis is, however, indispensable to assess the impact of this kind of mobility on societal inequalities. When examining this aspect, it is important to take into account that there are differences between the European countries with regard to the participation of different social, ethnic or gender groups in the educational system. The question arises as to whether or not these inequalities can be mitigated by EU programmes.

- *Transnationalism* is another concept used to describe the relationship between migrant minorities and the receiving society. Migration processes, especially international labour migration, are regarded as a normal component of the life course in a globalised world. These go along with the development of transnational systems, building a specific culture that includes aspects from different countries. Thus, research should focus on the evolution and empirical commonalities of transnational systems in Europe. We do not know if it is possible to identify migrant groups living a transnational way of life, and how their families are affected by it.

- *Mobility,* especially work-related mobility, is very important in family life. Spatial mobility and its impact on families has been studied to some extent, but there is a lack of research on the importance of mobility for the careers of spouses and variations in this domain between the European countries. These questions could be answered using existing national longitudinal data sets on individual occupational careers. In addition, it would be interesting to investigate their impact on partnership and family life, especially family formation and the stability of relationships. As appropriate and comparable data sets are not available for all European member states, new data should be collected to answer these questions.

Inequalities and insecurities

Inequality, together with family diversity, were topics of major importance to FAMILYPLATFORM from the outset. And because inequality is one of the so-called crosscutting aspects, some particularly important themes should be mentioned here.

Inequality and financial deprivation. Inequality has many facets, with material deprivation being a major concern. Children's risk of poverty is significantly higher in Europe than for adults. More information is needed in order to improve our social systems and the wellbeing of families and their children. As with many other research topics, there is a perceived need for more cross-national comparative basic data, using more than just 'income' indicators. Research that focuses on income-poverty falls short: It helps to identify the poor, but it fails to provide information on the process and the experiences of people who are at risk or already counted as being among the poor. Families may suffer from one of many forms of deprivation, for example educational deprivation, illiteracy, lack of social acceptance etc., which disconnects them and their children from societal participation in very important areas. This diminishes their chances for future development and success, particularly for children. Major efforts should be devoted to modelling new measurements and scales in order to obtain insight into these "weak" indicators of social deprivation. To go ahead with these ideas, more exploratory and qualitative studies are necessary. Additionally, we need studies that are able to model movements into and out of poverty, while taking several important aspects into account (see above), and their impact on these developments.

Violence. There are several important aspects to family violence and violence in the wider social environment. Violence *per se* is defined in different ways across different nations and cultures (OECD, 2010d), and varying types of legal sanction are linked to these definitions. Closely related to this are variations in the individual risk of experiencing violence. The probability that men, women, children, elderly, disabled people, as well as people in institutions or private care and individuals from certain social groups or living in specific areas, etc. will be victims of violent acts also varies.

Because family violence is often a taboo subject, it is rather difficult to obtain information on it, and it is estimated that many cases remain unreported. Although the UN and the WHO have published guidelines on carrying out prevalence research on violence, the demands for research, especially for comparative research, are very high. First of all, a common definition of violence must be developed in order to analyse basic data from public sources, police statistics, case statistics from courts and district attorneys' offices as well as information from institutions for victim counselling. It is very likely that this definition needs to be gendered. Additionally, standardised and agreed indicators for domestic violence, rape and sexual assault are required for future research. One challenge for research is to gain access to the field, in particular to victims and offenders, in order to estimate the prevalence of certain types of violence, with children and men being especially difficult target groups. A sensitive approach is needed to investigate abuse in care relationships, and new methods must be sought. To shed some light on the relationship between victims and offenders, qualitative methods should be used. For comparable studies, common methods and indicators must be

developed and respected. Thus it is crucial to develop advanced measures. There is a pressing need for more exact descriptions of the situation of specific target groups (e.g. family members or people with different social backgrounds), and this might be achieved by more qualitative analysis. It is particularly important to improve our knowledge and methods with regard to children as victims of violence, and also regarding child offenders. Appropriate age-specific measures and indirect indicators to assess abuse, negligence and psychological violence need to be developed. Additionally, research into counselling, refuges and housing for victims provided by statutory services and NGOs has to be extended, as does research into policing and criminal justice, the impact on health, perpetrator programmes and professional training.

Minorities. There were frequent calls within FAMILYPLATFORM to intensify research on certain social groups, particularly ethnic or national minorities such as the Sinti and Roma, who are most numerous in Romania, Spain, the former territory of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Hungary, the Basques in France and Spain, or the Sorbs in Germany[3]. These groups often suffer from social and financial inequalities, including a lower standing in society, fewer opportunities in the labour market, as well as a higher risk of unemployment. In this context, it is important to evaluate how successful different national policies have been in integrating these groups into society as equal citizens, by simultaneously recognising their background and traditions. In doing so, it would be interesting to see how different political strategies affect their wellbeing and how they see their role in society. In addition to national minorities, special family constellations are also seen as marginal groups, e.g. large families and rainbow families. Research should focus on their circumstances and on whether they are treated fairly and equally and given social recognition.

Living environment and housing. The living environment has a considerable impact on the wellbeing of families, as do nature, neighbourhood and housing. An adequate living environment is not equally distributed across Europe or within different social groups. Poorer people, foreign minorities and people from rural areas tend to have more problems with low quality housing. It is important to know if a poor living environment has a more or less powerful negative impact on future opportunities than it does on living conditions such as family situation, financial situation or health in general. Is there a connection between poor housing conditions and health?

One important connection to the living environment in the context of social inequalities is its consequence on the process of transition to parenthood and possible influence on childbearing decisions. Furthermore, it is important to know whether and in what ways childless couples have the edge over families with children, when both live in an adequate environment.

Adequate data is available only with regard to housing, which is covered by several larger databases (with the exception of the distribution of homeless people or those living in emergency shelters). However, detailed research studies do not cover the whole of the EU. Moreover, there is no statistical information on safety and crime at the EU level (but only for OECD members). In this connection, it was also suggested that the different related categories of housing, neighbourhood and closer natural environment as a whole should be taken into account.

In other respects, the most useful data available is that covering the EU15 Member States. Data for the newer Member States is rather sparse, so it was suggested that candidate states' data should be included early in order to avoid this problem in the future. Furthermore, there is a need for pertinent, comprehensive, comparable and country-specific research with regard to detailed projects on living environments and neighbourhood. For this purpose, it is important to try to harmonise conceptual definitions, particularly bearing in mind the rather subjective nature of the residents' satisfaction aspect.

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[3] The Roma are not seen as *national minorities* in all of the countries mentioned here.

Media and new information technologies

Some form of media, such as TV or telephone, is available in almost every family and is closely tied in with the organisation of everyday life. The use of media shapes family life, places demands on resources and increases the demand for new skills that are not common to everybody. So the availability of media causes great social differences and contributes to social inequality. It also affects family management and relationships, a topic that is a field in itself.

In general, there is a deficit in comparative research on the use of media in families. There is a need for more in-depth data allowing scientists to draw conclusions and provide policy makers with appropriate recommendations for action. Such data needs to be collected for differentiable age groups, and has to be specific enough to show up differences in media literacy and consumption between social classes, ethnicities and different cultures. Research must cover not only media consumption but also the environment in which this takes place and allows or hinders (particular forms of) consumption, as well as the entire 'media diets' of families and each of their members.

Research has to distinguish between two types of influence: the first is how trends in media development and dissemination shape family life and behaviour. Thus, we should examine the development of communication, the frequency with which it is used by family members (and others), information flows, risks and new opportunities. Looking at the flow of communication from the other direction, it is essential to understand what trends in family life influence the development and demand for (particular forms of) media. In this context, the question arises as to what social groups are at the forefront of new trends and what families are excluded.

In general, future research in the broad area of the media needs to pool questions and outcomes of a greater range of disciplines such as psychology, sociology and communication sciences, in order to learn from the knowledge already gained and to specify future research questions.

Although many issues and topics have been discussed in the research agenda, this is still only a selection of main fields. This summary has supplied an even more condensed version. We therefore strongly encourage reading the entire agenda, in which research areas and topics are discussed in more detail.

II Research Agenda

1   Main societal trends

Different societal trends can be observed in the European Union as a whole and within each member state. Each of the trends creates particular challenges. There are major societal trends affecting Europe and nearly all facets of the lives of Europeans and their families: globalisation, education and employment expansion, and demographic change. Within these major trends, there are several minor developments that have more recently had an impact on family life.

Globalisation

The first main societal trend, which is at the same time a major challenge for Europe, is globalisation. The major significant consequences of worldwide globalisation are:

- more opportunities and greater diversity;
- increasing demand for flexibility, which is strongly connected with
- mobility and therefore increasing physical dispersion;
- increasing uncertainty (especially in relation to employment and workplace); as well as
- a high degree of interconnectedness through new information technologies.

In this context, liberalisation of the labour markets has been a significant factor in changes in family life. It has led to more opportunities as well as increased demands for employees to be flexible. While, on the one hand, it is possible for individuals to be more independent to arrange their work according to their personal circumstances, there is greater insecurity and pressure on the other hand to be flexible in spatial as well as in temporal aspects (Klijzing, 2005; Mills & Blossfeld, 2005). One effect of the changes in labour markets is a rising number of so-called atypical forms of employment, e.g. fixed-term contracts and part-time work. This comes along with the so-called trend to individualisation, reducing social bonds and handing responsibility for their own lives to individuals. As one of the goals of the European Union is a "smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion" (European Commission, 2010a: 3), these developments mean a serious challenge. They require investment in innovation and education as well as in the modernisation of the labour market. This context demands new skills, more training and lifelong learning, a struggle against poverty and for social inclusion, and investments in new information technology, climate and energy (*ibid*.).

Education, employment and gender roles

Further significant developments are rising educational attainment levels and the growth in female employment. These trends are mostly important because of their relation to changes in gender roles and the imbalance between work and family, in which there are significant gender disparities. In recent decades, female education and participation in the labour market have increased remarkably. Despite that, the percentages for men are even higher in the EU as a whole and in most European countries– approximately 71 per cent, versus 59 per cent for women in the whole of the EU in 2009 (Eurostat, 2011a). Furthermore, considering the different extent of labour-force participation, it is observable that working part-time is mainly the province of women. In most European countries

(with the exception of the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Ireland and the UK), the percentages for male part-time work are under ten per cent (*ibid.*). With regard to women's part-time work, there are considerable differences between the European states: women in some Eastern, Nordic and Southern European countries are more likely to work full-time than women in some Central European countries (such as Germany, Austria, the Netherlands or Luxembourg). In addition, in nearly all European countries, mothers with minors, especially those with young children, and/or mothers with many children, work less frequently and not as intensively as childless women. However, it is the opposite for fathers, who have higher employment rates than childless men (Rost, 2009). It is important that fathers should have the chance to be included in the family system, not only as breadwinners and 'evening-and-weekend daddies', but as fully-fledged and involved fathers and parents, with corresponding rights and duties.

In most western welfare states, doing family is moving away from the 'male breadwinner model' to a more equal division of work (Kuronen *et al.,* 2010a). Nevertheless, in the majority of cases, women assume the bulk of the care of their children at the youngest age, although the extent differs between the single European nations (Eurostat, 2009). This leads to unequal opportunities in the labour market, especially when returning to it after a more or less long period of absence. An additional effect is that women have lower pension claims than men. The systematic extension of institutional child-caring facilities, especially for children under the age of three, was an elementary demand of the European Council to the European member states in the 'Barcelona objectives' of 2002. This should offer and ensure greater equality between men and women, as well as a certain freedom of choice. It also implies the removal of constraints on women participating in the labour market. The aims in this connection were to extend the rate of public childcare up to at least 90 per cent for children from the age of three until school entry, and at least 33 per cent for children under the age of three by 2010. Up to the year 2008, most European countries had not reached the goal for children under three years of age. For the older children, the achievement seems to be better (Commission of the European Communities, 2008). In this regard, it is also important to not only raise the amount of institutional childcare available, but also to improve its quality, particularly taking early childhood education into account.

As one aim of the Agenda 'Europe 2020' as well as of the 'Lisbon Agenda' is to achieve a higher participation of women in the labour market, measures also need to be taken to ease working circumstances and enable a practicable reconciliation of work and family. The expansion of childcare services is not the only way of enhancing equal labour market opportunities and diminishing the double burden for women. Encouraging fathers' involvement in childcare is also needed. This could be achieved through improved or more flexible working-time arrangements as well as active involvement in policies. Thus, the social recognition of the father's role within the family not only as breadwinner, but as an active and necessary part of family work and families' wellbeing is important. Considering the rise in female participation in the labour market, there are increasing opportunity costs in leaving the labour market for family care. Since it is mostly women who take on care responsibilities, they can hardly cope with full-time employment. The extent of the problem might be reduced if fathers receive greater social and public recognition, if investments are made in male leave-schemes, and if flexible working models become more widespread.

In this context, the availability of flexible institutional care in most European countries has been discussed as an important factor that might ease the situation. Developments in some European countries show that good institutional care combined with the possibility of private care (particularly for children) is accompanied by higher birth rates.

Demographic change

Rising education and (female) employment are strongly associated with 'demographic change'. This phenomenon comprises postponement of family formation and decreased fertility rates to below the level required to sustain the population. These trends result in societal ageing, which is also influenced at the other end of the life-course by higher life expectancy as a result of better medical health care.

Where family formation is concerned, rising uncertainty and especially economic insecurity have a significant impact. Employees' need for greater flexibility on the one hand, and fixed-term contracts on the other hand, lower the ability to plan ahead, which is an important condition in the context of family planning. It is important for young people to have good long-term employment prospects. Uncertainty often leads to less stable relationships or the avoidance of binding long-term relationships like marriage, and to the postponement of parenthood in particular. This is because these require a secure economic base. Another outcome of uncertainty is delayed family formation (or in extreme cases its abandonment). The mean age of women having their first child was about 30 years in the European Union in 2009 (Eurostat, 2011b). However, there were differences among the European member states. Since the 1970s, that age has increased from the early or mid-twenties to the late twenties or early thirties in the northern countries and in Central Europe, while in most Eastern European countries a strong increase has been observed since the mid-1990s (Beier *et al.,* 2010; OECD, 2010a). Accompanying the delay in having children are decreased fertility rates. In general, the number of children has declined since the mid-1960s, from between two and three to less than two children in nearly all European countries (Beier *et al.,* 2010).

In this respect, a good indicator of societal obstacles is the difference between childbearing preferences – the personal ideal number of children – and actual fertility behaviour. In nearly all of the European member states, the number of children desired is higher than the actual fertility rates. In analysing this difference, it is important to find ways of making (potential) young parents feel sufficiently secure, and of supporting them in having their desired number of children. There is a mismatch between labour market and the needs of young parents; this is especially true for women, who leave employment to take care of their children.

Increasing proportions of young people studying for and remaining in higher education for longer periods of time have led to changes in fertility and family formation. The explicit Europe 2020 target of raising the percentage of third-level education to at least 40 per cent (European Commission, 2010a) may reinforce the above-mentioned trends: higher education requires more time and inhibits self-financing. Thus, young people may put off leaving the parental home for even longer. This might result in later family formation and lower fertility. A further aspect in this regard is that highly educated women tend to have fewer children, if any at all. Hence, if working conditions, care facilities and the whole environment are not re-arranged in a more family-oriented way, we will probably face further adverse effects on demographic development.

Another consequence of postponement and relatively low fertility rates is that young people often have little or no experience of dealing with children and nurturing before having their own children. This could lead to even less involvement by fathers, as they feel less secure and competent. To strengthen the resources of families, a variety of strategies to encourage young parents need to be developed. This could be done by increasing family education and lowering personal obstacles to accessing this form of help. However, there are huge differences between the EU countries in this regard.

The other big concern in the context of low fertility rates is the relationship between society and the few children who are born: differences are observable in how they affect the perception of children,

including their needs, views and demands (e.g. education). On the one hand, it seems harder to set up a family-friendly environment whilst the elderly are the dominant societal group and the main focus of political orientation. Thus, for example, a stronger focus on care policies for the elderly might adversely affect investment in education, especially in respect of early education. On the other hand, the rights of children have been expanded, and they enjoy very high esteem within the family. Childcare and parenting has never been seen to be as demanding as it is today.

In addition, low fertility rates have an impact on the institutional character of the family. They lead to smaller nuclear families and, therefore, to fewer family ties. These are in turn an important source of care provision, as care relationships go in both directions: not only in the direction of the elderly, but also from the elderly to their grandchildren.

Migration and demography

In general terms, the mobility of European workers is a major goal of the EU. Migration, however, affects population and society in various ways. "After 1990 migration has become the main engine of population growth in many countries of Europe" (Sobotka, 2008: 226). Thus, in countries where there has been net inbound migration, increases in population can generally also be witnessed. As can be observed in nearly all European member states, a country with negative natural population growth (i.e. more deaths than births within a year) may nevertheless show a general increase in its population due to positive net migration. Immigration thus helps to avoid a further decline in the population caused by low fertility rates or a natural population loss (Eurostat, 2011c). In 2009, six per cent of the total European population comprised non-nationals[4]. Of these, more than one third were citizens of another member state. Nearly half of the non-EU population came from highly developed countries. Almost all the others were from countries with medium development, with only a small percentage coming from less developed countries[5] (Vasileva, 2010).

Apart from this direct influence on the population, migration also contributes to fertility behaviour as well as to changes in the age structure: the median age at the EU level was about 40.6 years in 2009 (with Germany being the 'oldest' and Ireland the 'youngest' country), whereas the mean age of foreigners alone was about 34.3 years. In general, third-country nationals are younger than European non-nationals, with the exception of some Eastern European countries (*ibid*.). Thus, immigration rejuvenates the national population. This is tied to the fact that immigrant non-nationals are younger at the time of immigration than nationals as a whole. Another point in this context is the trend of re-migration at a later age, which also regenerates the age structure. Additionally, non-national women in general have higher fertility rates than native women, especially those from Third World countries (Coleman, 1994).

Migration does not just contribute to a relatively stable population, but also produces the challenge of integrating people from different countries and with different cultural backgrounds, expectations and needs. Until now, it has been possible to observe different integration paths in the EU countries. There are also differences between the various forms of migration and the cultural or national background of migrants. European societies are confronted with a variety of tasks in dealing with

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[4]   "Non-nationals of a given country are persons who do not have the nationality of that country on the date in question" (Eurostat, 2003: 121).

[5]   The Human Development Index (HDI) "is calculated by the United Nations as a composite index incorporating statistical measures of life expectancy, literacy, educational attainment and GDP per capita" (Vasileva 2010: 2) and differentiates countries into High developed (Europe, North America, large part of South America, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and including some countries in Western Asia), Medium and Less developed (the rest of Asia and Africa) (*ibid*.).

these differences and easing the associated inequalities. In this regard, families with a foreign background have to be considered separately: they may have special or different needs, different living conditions, including family structures, traditions and attitudes that expose them to greater risks.

Social security systems

Changes in fertility behaviour lead to a changing age-dependency ratio. There are more elderly and very old people who are not able to work but need more (health) care. This affects social systems, as decreasing input confronts growing demands, e.g. in health and care systems. In some countries, the retirement age has been raised, yet this poses problems with regard to high unemployment rates amongst the elderly. Additionally, after a certain age, people are unable to do physically or psychologically demanding work.

The increase in life-span mostly causes a very long period of caring at the end of a person's life. To illustrate this further, women aged 65 had an additional life expectancy of about 21 years in 2007 throughout the EU. However, only nine of these years are healthy ones. In the remaining time, they are at risk of illness and therefore tend to need (more and intensive) care. As is well known, men have a shorter life-span. Thus, they had 'just' an additional 17 years in 2007, with about nine of these being healthy years (Eurostat, 2010a). This results in men not needing care for such long periods of time. Considering the fact that comprehensive care is very time-intensive, this problem can hardly be solved by the younger generation, as often both men and women work. As labour market insecurity has risen, leaving and then re-entering the labour market is not easy. For the so-called 'sandwich generation', which has to care for their young children and their elderly parents simultaneously, this situation is even more challenging.

As the number of tax payers and contributors to social security falls, there will be quantitative and qualitative supply problems. This is especially true for publicly provided and funded care. The very old, i.e. people above the age of 80, are those most in need of very intensive and comprehensive care, for example, on account of the increasing incidence of Alzheimer's disease. The importance of care is also highlighted in the European strategy of October 2007, "Together for health: a strategic approach for the EU 2008-2013": "putting in place a framework to improve health in the EU through a value-driven approach, recognising the links between health and economic prosperity [and] integrating health in all policies" (Eurostat, 2010b: 217). Beyond that, a relatively high proportion of pan-European social benefits were allocated to the elderly (approximately 39 per cent) and health or illness respectively (approximately 30 per cent) in 2008 (Eurostat, 2011d)[6]. In this context, it is also important to invest in health via prevention in order to lower the high costs connected with (chronic) illnesses or diseases and care needs in old age.

Nearly half of all the elderly today in need of significant care are cared for by their adult children. As shown above, children will barely be able to care for their parents adequately by themselves in future. Yet all European "countries are moving towards home-care, private provision of professional formal care and cash transfers in care for older people" (Kuronen *et al.,* 2010a: 7). In most European countries, a trend can thus be observed towards payment for informal care ('cash-for-care') (*ibid*.). According to the findings of EUROFAMCARE, only four per cent of all carers and 37 per cent of the elderly received care allowances. As a result of the reduced hours in paid employment, carers' income is mostly lower than average. Furthermore, they are at a higher risk of social inequality and poverty. Most home-care for the elderly is still done by women (76 per cent) (Triantafillou *et al.,*

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[6]   By comparison, "only" some 8 per cent were allocated to families or children (*ibid*.).

2006). Women also make up the major component of childcare. Therefore, they have lower incomes and are less able to save for their own future care.

Migration of care personnel is sometimes seen as a possible solution to under-supply of care in Europe. This is one facet of the wider trend to greater migration and mobility. To implement adequate labour market solutions for home-carers on the one hand, and provide financial benefits on the other hand, are major challenges for European societies.

Social inequality

As the agenda Europe 2020 demanded, the struggle against *social inequality* is a major aim of the EU, notably as part of economic growth objectives. Due to the increased risks arising from individualisation, as mentioned above, social inequality is an important societal issue. Inequality does not only arise in the context of financial deprivation. Families' environment, housing and violence within families also have to be included. Here, certain groups that cannot cope with the demands of globalisation adequately are of particular relevance. These are, for example, those with low levels of educational attainment, migrants, minorities, families with a large number of children, lone-parents, the elderly, and children from socially deprived households as well as women by comparison with men. As formulated by Wall *et al.* (2010b: 3):

> *"… one central characteristic of EU countries is the value given to social equality and solidarity. In spite of growing doubts created by ethnicity, changes in class-consciousness and a stronger belief in the values of freedom and self-determination, public opinion in the EU considers that social equality is a major value and that it is not automatically obtained through market forces: it is part of the government's responsibility and is considered as a marker of the European social model. Social inequalities and how they are developing thus play a major role, politically and socially, not only in EU member states' thinking and policy agenda but also in the feelings of justice and wellbeing of EU citizens and families".*

Communication and media

Another trend, which is also connected to inequalities and has a considerable impact on families, is the rising use of *new information technologies,* including the risks and opportunities associated with *communication* and *media*. As mentioned above, this aspect is of major importance in the context of globalisation, in that it creates a sense of intense interconnectedness. One of the objectives of the Europe 2020 agenda is, accordingly, to invest in a digital society to "speed up the roll-out of high-speed internet and reap the benefits of a digital single market for households and firms" (European Commission, 2010a: 30). This includes solving the problem of unequal access to the internet as a result of someone's social environment, especially for children. Equal access to the new information and communication technologies may lead to greater equality and promote equal opportunities in general.

Minorities

Besides immigrants *per se*, there are also other cultural groups, so-called 'national minorities'[7]. These are mostly citizens in a certain country who have a cultural background different to that of the rest of the population, like the Roma. The problem is that national minorities often have a lower standing within the society, including a higher risk of unemployment and economic inequality. This is also caused by their under-representation in political bodies and institutions. Because of this they lack opportunities to represent their interests and of improving their situation. Hence the European Council established the "Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM)" in 1995, to guarantee their equal treatment in society and law and to protect them from discrimination (Council of Europe, 1995). Apart from this convention, which has not been ratified by every member state, the challenge is to integrate minorities into society and to ensure they are given equal opportunities in the light of their own cultural identity.

2   Challenges for policy and research

The following section concentrates on policy conclusions emerging from the FAMILYPLATFORM project as a whole. It takes into account the different contributions and interactions (debates during meetings and conferences) of the various participant groups (expert researchers, stakeholders, policy makers, website visitors). In accordance with the decision-making process within FAMILYPLATFORM, there is a division into main and subsidiary aspects. Thus care, doing family, life course and transitions as well as mobility and migration are discussed in detail, while other topics are dealt with more briefly.

Wellbeing was defined as a vital criterion for policy and research, and its definition was an essential for the FAMILYPLATFORM. A short summary of its most relevant elements is given below:

- Wellbeing requires *security* of the family and its members in many aspects of everyday life. This goes beyond material security, including job security, relationships, emotional attachments and confidence in the future. It is well known that the decision to start a family is highly dependent on a subjective feeling of security and certainty.

- *Individual self-fulfilment* is more than just self-realisation. Self-fulfilment includes the possibility of arranging relationships and family affairs in a suitable way.

- It seems clear that *health* is a basic criterion for wellbeing. This does not mean that the ill or frail are excluded. There was a focus in FAMILYPLATFORM on ensuring that people are supported as much as possible in their efforts to stay healthy.

- *Involvement in society* is another relevant criterion. Whether or not individuals and their families feel included and are able to participate in society is another crucial aspect of wellbeing.

- *Love, respect and tolerance* have a strong impact on the emotional and physical health of all family members.

- *Balance* at the individual level means being able to manage personal interests and family life satisfactorily. The *time* aspect is strongly linked to balance, because different areas of life

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[7] Within the Council of Europe there is no precise definition of the concept of *national minorities,* as the member states were unable to agree on one (Council of Europe, 2008). The problem is to find a universal definition that includes all national migrants in all the different European countries in their individual comprehension and that does not discriminate against certain groups or people (Malloy, 2005).

have different time horizons. To have enough time for the family and for oneself is very important for personal wellbeing.

- *Equality* means ensuring that people are able to make choices. There are various aspects to equality, such as gender, family form, class, education, etc.

- Doing family in everyday life is a very ambitious task. Families should know that they are able to receive *support*, and where they can obtain it. This is true for private as well as institutional support.

- *Environmental conditions* have a major impact on living conditions and subjective wellbeing. These conditions also include many other aspects such as housing, media, technology, and solidarity.

Against this background, the following challenges for policy and research can be highlighted.

2.1   Care

During the proceedings of FAMILYPLATFORM *care* was highlighted as the most important field for policy, particularly in the light of the societal trends towards demographic ageing, changed gender roles, and female labour force participation. This field was discussed with reference to caring for children, the elderly or other relatives as well as to the integration of different policy areas. The last aspect also includes taking different points of view into account, namely those of the care receivers as well as those of care-givers.

Different aspects of *childcare* were discussed, including the question of how policies could help couples and parents to receive the childcare they prefer. It was suggested that holistic concepts should be used for care provision, leave schemes, adequate working time arrangements, more self-determined flexibility in working hours and, also, for enabling parents to choose (Wall *et al.,* 2010c; Blum & Rille-Pfeiffer, 2010a; Kuronen *et al.,* 2010a). In particular, recognition (Kapella *et al.,* 2011) and remuneration of unpaid family work were highlighted. In some countries of the European Union, there are no paternity leave policies (Blum & Rille-Pfeiffer, 2010a). Against this background, it was suggested that targets should be set similar to those previously established under the 'Barcelona Targets for Parental Leave': a directive containing a clause prescribing that by 2020, 25 per cent of parental leave in the EU should be taken by fathers (Wall *et al.,* 2010c). Another suggestion was that all EU countries should introduce nine months of paid parental leave and make up for the income by means of a benefit at a level of 66 per cent of previous earnings. For mothers, clearer regulations concerning breast-feeding in maternal employment regulations that explicitly consider the needs and wellbeing of (the) child(ren) would facilitate re-entry after a short career break. Allowing parents to choose their preferred childcare arrangement is also important for later phases of the family life-course. Thus, offering parents the possibility of taking leave when the child is older would be an encouragement. To provide support for families as well as children from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, for example, investments in universal early childcare services combined with additional resources seem to be a promising way forward. Such investments are also important for disabled children and their families (*ibid.*).

When discussing *care of the elderly or disabled relatives*, a distinction should be made between care taken or provided in the family and that provided outside it. For the former, a remunerated family leave scheme that allows taking time to care for relatives whenever this is required by the individual situation was suggested. Supporting care-taking of elderly relatives can strengthen intergenerational

solidarity. To achieve this goal, a qualitatively and quantitatively good system of external care-supporting care providers needs to be built up. The same is true of support for people who care for disabled relatives at any age. To ensure good framework conditions for highly qualified work in the care sector and against the background of the lack of a specialised workforce (Matthies, 2010), legalisation of cross-border recruitment of care personnel is a possibility. For the development of adequate policy measures, the different life situations of the heterogeneous group of care recipients have to be recognised and addressed. To meet the needs of the elderly, investments in retirement housing, palliative care and the care system as a whole are necessary for dealing with the process of societal ageing. Older people are not only to be seen as care receivers but also as care-givers (*ibid.*). They often provide help and support for their spouses and grandchildren – and this is particularly true for women.

Care-givers and their needs also have to be considered. Men and women are not involved in providing care at equal terms – in the majority of cases, the care providers are female (Kuronen *et al.,* 2010a; European Commission, 2009a). For care within the family, policies are needed to reconcile work and care. At the same time, carers' standards of living and their (future) pensions have to be guaranteed. This could, among other measures, include specific social protection for carers. Another or a supplementary measure is the creation of a comprehensive (paid) family leave arrangement in order to permit all family members (siblings, grandparents etc.) to care for relatives whenever this is necessary. Additionally, care personnel are needed. As recruitment in this area is increasingly cross-border, it is a challenge to organise social care legally and ensure framework conditions for 'good work' in this sector in all European countries (Wall *et al.,* 2010c). It was suggested that European policies should pay attention to the special living conditions of immigrant care workers, whose families often remain in the country of origin, and simultaneously take into account the specific needs of ageing migrants, for example with regard to their specific cultural and social backgrounds.

To achieve the goal of guaranteeing wellbeing of the whole family system, and especially of children, different policies influencing care (arrangements) should be integrated. For this purpose, labour market policies, family policies, care facilities, leave policies, ageing policies, taxes and benefits have to be integrated. The point of view of employers and their responsibilities have to be included. To be able to improve the situations of caring families, policies should also encourage more corporate social responsibility on the one hand (such as care services provided or funded by companies), and support intergenerational solidarity and relationships on the other hand (*ibid.*). All in all, it seems to be important to strengthen policies that support care arrangements, because they may lead to more gender equality. Continuous monitoring of the effects of leave policies and a more systematic evaluation of policies relating to care provide the prerequisites for the development of policies on the basis of empirical evidence. They would also help to deal with the aforementioned challenges.

2.2   Doing family

Another major policy challenge deriving from the described societal developments is *doing family.* The management of families has become more complicated and ambitious as less time is spent within the home and different timetables have to be organised. Doing family is related to the question of how families divide or reconcile paid and unpaid work. This, in turn, is linked to gender equality, as most of the latter is done by women (e.g. care work).

The issue of reconciliation of family life and work is becoming increasingly important as more women enter the labour market, and the male breadwinner model becomes increasingly inadequate. Future policies have to take this into consideration in order to help partners combine work and family life according to their individual preferences. This is especially important as institutional and family times

are often asynchronous and have to by synchronised (Kapella *et al.,* 2011). Policy frameworks relating to *unpaid work* influence the division of labour within families and gender equality. In constructing measures to deal with the situation, the social and economic value of non-remunerated work of parents and carers at home has to be kept in mind (Wall *et al.,* 2010c; Kapella *et al.,* 2011). Ways of achieving this might include granting social benefits on equal terms to those of paid employees, or by developing and promoting innovative forms of remuneration. With regard to gender equality, it was suggested that a means should be found to convince men to take on a greater share of housework and childcare tasks (see 3.1), as well as to encourage women to accept such behaviour from their partners. Leave schemes are, therefore, to be seen not only from the point of view of care but also with regard to doing family and gender equality. A sizeable and partly non-transferable payment might be one way of encouraging fathers and foster equality. Family associations stressed that family policies should promote the equal involvement of both mothers and fathers. Changing policies related to family management is a good opportunity for incorporating the diversity of families, and for creating policies that address all types of parents, including, for example, same-sex couples.

Gender equality is not only important in unpaid work but also generally in the division of work between spouses and when considering questions related to the labour market. Changes to labour market policies are the most promising way of achieving gender equality (Wall *et al.,* 2010c; Blaskó & Herche, 2010a; Kuronen *et al.,* 2010a). This includes regulation of part-time work policies and flexible working hours, equal payment for men and women as well as the same rights – or even a requirement – for both partners to take parental leave. In general, there is a need for more policies facilitating the labour market re-entry of parents following career breaks, not only with part-time work regulations (Blaskó & Herche, 2010a), but also with lifelong learning opportunities or childcare services (Wall *et al.,* 2010c). A holistic approach combining all these issues might solve one of the major challenges for future family policies.

In addition to measures relating to unpaid work, one could also redesign *labour market-related policies* to assist people with their work-life balance. One possibility would be to extend support for re-entering the labour market after career breaks for family reasons, for example, by facilitating learning of new occupational skills. This might also reduce gender segregation across economic sectors. Part-time work policies may provide people with opportunities to better reconcile time for the family and working hours, if they contain adequate financial and legal regulation. Naturally, employers have an interest in these regulations. Therefore, incentives for them to facilitate work-life balance have to be considered. Tax incentives could encourage firms to hire employees after a career break. The strengthening of corporate social responsibility could be another way of achieving these goals (*ibid.*; Blaskó & Herche, 2010a), for example by means of:

- a family-friendly charter on which employer and employees within a company agree jointly;
- a set of principles such as the respect of an employee's role in the family;
- equal opportunities for men and women;
- integration of family-friendliness into the business plan;
- flexible working arrangements such as tele-working or part-time work.

Policy support for firms is crucial. The results of a survey analysing family-friendliness in the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Poland and Sweden showed that companies often complain about receiving too little support from the state for the implementation of family-friendly measures (BMFSFJ, 2010).

Different forms of doing family arise as a result of the *variety of family forms*. This led to a demand for policies reflecting explicitly that there are different constellations of families (such as the standard nuclear family, single-parent, same-sex, step and patchwork families, as well as other forms) in order to find measures that benefit all of them (Wall *et al.,* 2010c). To this end, a common international framework defining different family forms and functions of the family could be worked out.

Besides the aforementioned measures in specific fields, there were calls to *integrate different policy fields*. Gender equality policies appear to be more relevant for policy makers than family policies. However, one needs to bear in mind that a gap between these areas hampers the achievement of their individual objectives. Some of those who took part in the FAMILYPLATFORM discussions mentioned that, until now, the most successful policies have been linked to the labour market and especially to the flexibilisation of working hours on the one hand, and to childcare on the other hand (*ibid.*). Gender equality and family decisions may be particularly susceptible to such regulations. The concentration of policies influencing families in one ministry or department is one possible solution in order to ensure that family issues are taken into account when designing policies. Moreover, the introduction of a family impact report or assessment as an obligatory element of political decision-making processes would be a measure that might not only make the effects of these decisions on family wellbeing visible, but also implement the idea of family mainstreaming (*ibid.*). The inclusion of scientific results, evaluations and evidence-based recommendations is important, too.

2.3   Life-course and transitions

Life-course and transitions in family life encompass different episodes and transitions in family life, as well as their order and timing. Policies have an impact on life-course changes in that they may support family members in these processes and facilitate important steps in family life. In particular, the transitions to adulthood and to parenthood were emphasised as being crucial (Leccardi & Perego, 2010a). This is because both are increasingly affected by the current social and economic climate of uncertainty. As a result, the transition to adulthood has become more difficult (*ibid.*), while parenthood is very often postponed (Beier *et al.,* 2010; Stauber, 2010). This situation partly explains the decreased fertility rates in many European countries (see 2). Political attention should focus not only at the individual but at the familial level, as the life-courses of family members influence each other.

As far as the *transition to adulthood* is concerned, policies (on employment, education, participation in society, intergenerational solidarity, gender and having time for families) are important resources for young people in their transition to adulthood (Leccardi & Perrego, 2010a). An example of the impact of certain policies is the comparison of the Finnish and Italian models: the former provides young people with some financial independence. This allows them to leave their parents' home and become independent when they start studying, i.e. at the age of 18. By contrast, Italy has no equivalent policy, and young adults stay with their parents into their 30s. They see themselves as responsible for their own lives later in their life-course only. In addition, a controversial discussion arose (Wall *et al.,* 2010c): some participants argued that different policies should be combined in order to support the transition to adulthood adequately. Others expressed doubts about the need to promote specific policies for this transition, as overestimating a rather uncomplicated transitional process can be counterproductive.

The transition to parenthood is another important step in the life-course. In discussions in FAMILYPLATFORM meetings, it was suggested that integrated policies should be developed to help young people when they want to start a family (Stauber, 2010). This might have a positive effect on

the average number of children, thereby influencing demographic developments and thus the whole society. Policies might help to realise ideal fertility aspirations. For others, it is questionable whether low fertility is actually only a problem or whether it has positive consequences, too, and provides opportunities, especially against the global background of population growth and the likely risk of further distributive conflicts in forthcoming decades (Wall *et al.,* 2010c). If one assumes that fertility at the replacement level is good, parental benefits are one possible policy measure to encourage the transition to parenthood. However, one has to keep in mind the need to give people autonomy in their life-course choices (e.g. to care for their children or to return/continue to work) when designing financial benefits. Family organisations, in particular, stressed the extraordinary life situation of parents-to-be and the currently insufficient political support for them in Europe. Policy should pay more attention to marginal groups such as young migrants, families in poverty or pregnant adolescents, for example.

Parenting is a transition with effects over a long period of time, and this should be taken into account when designing policies (*ibid.*). Consequently, parental leave regulations might be included in life-course policies, which means that the possibility of taking leave is not limited to the period following the birth of a child (see 3.1). This might lead to more gender equality, as fathers engage in childcare duties to a greater extent when children are older. Hence, they are expected to be more likely to take family leave when their children are, for example, teenagers than when they are babies. Such a measure could, therefore, foster children's wellbeing.

To conclude, it was suggested that policies should be adopted that *ease the rush hours of life* in the family life-cycles with regard to the reconciliation of work and family. "Based on the needs and objectives of families" (Kapella *et al.,* 2011: 36) policies should accordingly take into account the important aspects of time management and choices, as well as the employers' view (Kapella *et al.*, 2011). Policies have to create concrete opportunities for young people. The challenge here is to provide better guidance and support throughout the whole life-course for all diverse and plural family forms. This might imply, for example, decoupling parenthood from sexual orientation and from a hetero-normative background (Wall *et al.,* 2010c). Beyond these recommendations, it was suggested that policy making strategies as well as the goals of the policy actors and the backstage dynamics of policies should be monitored, particularly in the light of current debates on gender, employment and fertility.

Other events that may occur during the life-course are *family break-up, divorce or dissolution* and the establishment of new relationships. With regard to these stages in life, participants in the FAMILYPLATFORM proceedings recommended measures that might help to make families stable, on the one hand supporting partners in their efforts to continue their relationship (*ibid.*), while, on the other hand, taking new relationships into consideration as well, for example with regard to adoption rights.

In the wake of such an event, the connection between the children and the parent living in another household is often weakened. Policies provide legal frameworks for mechanisms to preserve the ties between parents and children after a relationship break-up (*ibid.*). A legal framework involving joint custody may make it easier for the parent living elsewhere to maintain their relationship with their offspring. One way to ease difficult or unexpected transitions and life stages and to give support to families might be the implementation of 'mediation and counselling centres' (Kapella *et al.*, 2011).

2.4   Mobility and migration

Spatial mobility is an important issue in Europe. European citizens have the right to move freely from one European country to another to take up employment and to settle down with their family (European Union, 2004). It is strictly forbidden for the member states to discriminate against these migrant workers and their families on the basis of their nationality. They have to be treated equally with regard to employment-related issues, public housing, tax advantages and social benefits. When designing policies on migration, the fact that about one third of the migrants are from another EU27 member state and two-thirds come from non-European countries has to be taken into account. Nevertheless, the proportions differ significantly between European countries (Vasileva, 2010: 1f.). In addition to cross-border migration of European and non-European citizens, mobility comprises short-term mobility, migration within a country, commuting, seasonal migration and other forms of movement. The different forms of mobility require different policy responses.

Mobility is increasingly required in all European countries, at the policy, job market and educational levels (Beier *et al.,* 2010). In some countries, unemployment benefits (for example) may be reduced if an unemployed person is not willing to relocate or to commute. The problem with such regulations is that they see people as individuals and not as being embedded in social contexts, i.e. in families. People are therefore often unwilling to become mobile (Lück & Ruppenthal, 2010). Relationships to others – the spouse, the children and the parents – and social duties within these bonds have to be considered when designing policies that require people to be mobile for employment reasons. Being forced to be mobile may produce stress and represent a risk to physical and psychological health.

Increasing mobility and the requirement to be mobile, complicate the transition to parenthood, especially for women: mothers are only seldom mobile, and mobile women are only seldom mothers. At the same time, mobility and fatherhood seem to be compatible (Hofmeister & Schneider, 2010). Against the background of demographic ageing and increasing mobility, mobile women's decisions to stay childless could lead to a further decrease in fertility rates. The pressure to be mobile should accordingly be reduced. If this is not possible, support should be provided e.g. in the form of financial help, childcare facilities, flexible working hours and/or home-office regulations.

For *migrants* from third-countries with different cultures, integration polices are needed to help immigrants become part of the receiving society. Concepts of integration have to be broad and include, for example, measures to help children from migrant families to achieve as well at school as children from the host society. As far as the major political goal of wellbeing is concerned, family reunification has to be carefully thought out. Reunification influences family life, for example, if some of the family members stay in one country while others live elsewhere. Living with the family is supposed to increase people's wellbeing, because the family provides fundamental emotional and practical support. Family reunification is already a right for immigrants from a third country living in a European state (Wall *et al.,* 2010a). Nevertheless, the actual realisation of this right differs among the member states. Another aspect influencing the wellbeing of migrant families is that they are often at special risk. For example, they are much more often affected by income deprivation than the members of the receiving society (*ibid.*). This is especially true for migrants from non-EU countries.

Mobility and migration may also have many positive effects. Migration is often a way of quickly softening the impact of the ageing societies we are faced with due to demographic change and its consequences (*ibid.*). It helps to fulfil an economy's short term needs. This is a fact that is not well known within these societies. Policy makers could publicise this and other positive effects of migration in the host societies to create a climate in which migrants are accepted. This could lead to a reduction in the number of problems related to the acceptance of immigrants.

2.5   Inequalities and insecurities

Beyond those areas that have been singled out as being crucial for the future development of European society, there are significant additional aspects related to the main areas. Inequality and financial deprivation, violence, minorities and living environment can be subsumed under inequalities and insecurities.

Inequality and financial deprivation

There is growing polarisation between families with very low and very high incomes (Reiska *et al.,* 2010a). To tackle this problem, 2010 was the "European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion" [8]. The issue of *child poverty,* in particular, is very important, as poverty is to some degree socially 'inherited'. In the context of an ageing population, avoiding child poverty may be a good way of achieving sustainable social, economic and political growth in Europe. Furthermore, it could also break the *cycle of poverty* that influences child wellbeing (Wall *et al.,* 2010a). However, one should not only focus on income deprivation, but additionally consider the related loss of dignity and the inability to gain access to suitable housing, education, health services, nutrition and opportunities in society. Intergenerational solidarity is a possible means of breaking the cycle of poverty, as different generations can provide both emotional and financial support for each other. Nonetheless, this can be helpful, as poverty is often transmitted socially from the parents to the children.

Holistic and continuous *policies* that support all generations are needed. They should facilitate access to an adequate income and affordable quality education, as well as to housing and health care for all generations. Families need means and opportunities of escaping from cycles of poverty and disadvantage. This implies not only financial support, but also additional resources and skills, provided through targeted policies leading to empowerment (Wall *et al.,* 2010c). A key focus of future family-related policies should be on tackling increasing material discrepancy leading, for example, to different medical entitlements and medical care. In this respect, it is particularly important that the group-specific impact of other policy areas (such as labour market policies, gender-equality policies or parental leave policies), which do not necessarily deal with inequality as such, be taken into account at the same time.

Social inequality and families

Research on families over the last few decades has tended to neglect analysis of social, cultural, spatial, environmental and regional differences and their consequences on family life and experience. Two interrelated research issues within this fundamental field of research were emphasised. Firstly, the need for a deeper understanding of social inequalities between families. How long do different types of families spend in disadvantage or poverty? Why and how do some families accumulate advantages or disadvantages? How does living in disadvantaged families, environments or difficult housing situations affect different family members and what are their experiences? How and why does the extent of social inequality between families and its effects on family outcomes differ across European countries? Secondly, it is important to understand more about the role of families in reproducing social inequalities across the generations, thus affecting children's life chances.

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[8]   www.2010againstpoverty.eu [accessed 18/03/2011]

Transmission of social advantage and disadvantage via the family may take place both at the material and socio-cultural levels. In this context, it is crucial to understand the linkages between policies and inequalities between and within families, by examining not only how policies help to check the worst inequalities produced by differential access to resources, but also how and in what ways policies are likely to challenge the entrenched advantages some families have and pass on to their children. Research on the causes and consequences of social inequalities and how to tackle them is the key to understanding the relative position of disadvantaged families and families at risk of failing.

Violence

Family violence is a very important aspect, as it diminishes the wellbeing of the victims. There are several forms of violence, which may be psychological, economic, physical or sexual. Most family violence is gender-based and takes place between conjugal partners. However, it also occurs between parents and children or elderly parents and their adult children. Victims are both women and men, even if the latter are often out of focus (Wall *et al.,* 2010a). A common point in all the discussions of violence was that domestic violence is to be considered a public concern and not a family affair.

Legislation on domestic violence and its impact were picked out as key topics. Policies and legislation efforts in this area have only recently been made in many countries, as most of them have only considered domestic violence a public crime since the 1990s (*ibid.*). Even though a common standard of legislation would be desirable in the EU, they are still very different. Some countries (like Germany and Austria) have taken major steps forward in recent years, while others have made only minor changes or none at all. Nevertheless, one has to keep in mind that legislation itself is not enough to combat family violence, and that it must be combined with other policies. Additionally, social intervention, dissemination of national or international 'best-practice models', implementation of special training for all professionals dealing with victims of domestic violence and international co-operation in public awareness campaigns are needed. For men as victims, in particular, public awareness campaigns are required, to combat existing stereotypes and provide information on what domestic violence is (Wall *et al.,* 2010c). These campaigns are to be developed for law enforcement officers as well as for different types of professionals (health-care professionals, police officers, judges and social welfare offices, etc.). The goal of this set of initiatives should be to abolish violence not only in intimate relationships, but particularly violence and abuse against children. The protection of women and men against abuse and the assurance that they are free from sexual obligations *vis-à-vis* their spouse are important issues for both partners in a marriage. Structural violence is another type of violence that needs to be considered. It results from structural inequalities and can be tackled by guaranteeing everybody the same rights and opportunities.

Minorities

The issue of minorities was taken up in the discussions in different ways.

On the one hand, rare family forms (single-parent families, same-sex families, step-families, patchwork families, etc.) can be seen as minorities. Policies have to respect their different living arrangements and support all of them in order to avoid inequalities (Beier *et al.,* 2010; Wall *et al.,* 2010c). Homosexuals, in particular, were considered a relevant minority. The legal acceptance of social relationships between gay or lesbian stepparents and their stepchildren is still not implemented sufficiently throughout the European Union (Beier *et al.,* 2010). An example of this is the lack of the possibility of adopting a child for same-sex families. The negative stereotypes which

this group is confronted with can be affected by policies and campaigns. Differences between policies on gay/lesbian couples and heterosexual couples still exist. It would be helpful to unify legislation for the two groups in the EU in order to avoid legal discrimination based on sexual orientation.

On the other hand, there were also discussions about *ethnic and religious minorities.* These groups are particularly important, as they are often affected by income deprivation, poor housing, low educational attainment levels and other inequalities (Reiska *et al.,* 2010a). In this context, there was a perceived need to move away from ethnically-based discrimination and to improve the social and financial conditions of ethnic minorities in order to move closer to the goal of minimising or even abolishing social discrimination. This is important for several groups, e.g. Roma, Turks and others.

Living environment

A family's living environment reflects inequalities in economic and social circumstances. Disadvantaged groups typically live in the worst parts of the city and are affected more by the lack of green areas and public transport services, by noisy and dirty roads as well as by industrial pollution (Reiska *et al.,* 2010a). Poor people have less access to affordable and adequate housing, though the extent of this does vary across Europe. Policies can influence housing inequality.

The location of the place of abode is another important aspect: it makes a difference for family life and wellbeing if one lives in a crowded or empty neighbourhood, if there is a low or high rate of crime, if there is good or bad access to public transport, etc. Policies could help families by providing more affordable housing in good neighbourhoods. The quality of deprived neighbourhoods could be improved with greater investment in infrastructure. This is also a measure to tackle poverty, crime and low education, and thus a way to exit the cycle of deprivation.

As life-courses and family life transitions become more and more diverse, it is not surprising that this also has an impact on the structure of family homes. For example, small families, childless couples or people living alone need fewer rooms than large families. Instead of reacting to the higher diversity of different living arrangements, the housing stock has actually become less diverse (*ibid.*). This is partly a consequence of policies promoting house-ownership as the highest level of housing security.

Elderly people have special housing needs, and their needs will change in the future against the background of the increasing life expectancy. Older people want to live independently and be surrounded by their family and friends for as long as possible (Rantz *et al.,* 2009). With regard to family dynamics, single-person housing with adequate facilities for the elderly are a particular necessity. In addition, other forms of retirement dwellings will be required.

Family education

Family education in general is a means to help parents guide and educate their children. Parents should be guaranteed access to support services, and projects should be further promoted in order to empower parents. Possible programmes are parental involvement programmes, educational programmes for parents, training in communication skills, problem solving, etc. In addition to financial support, skills and empowerment are good measures to help parents and to tackle problems like dropping out of school through greater parental involvement in schools, etc. (Wall *et al.,* 2010c). Special training could also help parents in their relationship with each other.

Family education was highlighted in the context of media use and the responsibility of parents to teach media skills to their children. More policy strategies on the interrelationship between family,

media and internet use have to be developed, as parents often lack the technical skills or knowledge to officer advice and guidance to their children on this. The European agenda on strategies for dealing with information and communication technology should move away from the current focus on the risks of media to a more proactive approach.

Family mainstreaming

The idea of family mainstreaming came up frequently in the FAMILYPLATFORM proceedings. It was suggested that it should be included in the agenda in a similar way to gender mainstreaming in order to create equal opportunities for all families in society (*ibid.*). This means that an international plan of action on the family is needed that integrates the perspective of families into overall policy making. All policy fields impacting family wellbeing should be taken into account, and have to be filled in a family impact report. Families should be seen as agents and assets, not as problems. Family mainstreaming could be a component of the social cohesion policy of the European Union and lead to a family-friendly bureaucracy and care services.

In designing a family mainstreaming strategy, it is important to take into account all family members, i.e. men, women and children at different stages of their life-course. It is equally important to keep all the different types of family forms in mind if the goal of enhancing family wellbeing with this measure is to be achieved. The mainstreaming of children's rights, for example, might be a way of ensuring that the different stages in the life-course are represented.

2.6   Media and new information technologies

Media is a rapidly changing area: there are more and more new technologies and access to these is increasing, former analogue media contents are being digitalised, communication structures are changing, etc. The importance of this policy area is reflected in its increasingly prominent position on the policy agenda. A part of the Europe 2020 Strategy (European Commission, 2010a) – or to be more precise, of the flagship initiatives of this strategy – is the 'Digital Agenda for Europe' (European Commission, 2010b), which focuses on the aspect of smart growth. The extension of information and communication technologies is crucial for achieving this goal. To maximise the social and economic potential of ICT, more investment in fast and ultra-fast internet access is planned. A single digital market for the EU is seen as an important way of closing the gap with the USA. Research and innovation, trust and security as well as common standards are other important goals of the strategy.

Against the background of the development and the intentions of the EU, some family-related aspects have to be considered and integrated in policy formation. One difficulty is that parents often know less about new media than their children. Accordingly, they are sometimes not able to teach them how to use these technologies and protect them from possible dangers. In the Digital Agenda for Europe, the improvement of digital literacy and skills is seen as a crucial point.

Furthermore, the relevance of *relationships within the family,* for both family members and society as a whole, was seen as an important issue during the FAMILYPLATFORM proceedings. Here, new technologies offer a great advantage in that they allow people to keep in touch with relatives living at a different place or in another country at fairly low cost. Policies could foster the dissemination of the advantages of the new technologies and enable people to participate in the new opportunities.

On the other hand, the internet entails new risks. For example, the risks of inappropriate content (e.g. pornographic, self-harm and violent content or racist/hate material), unwelcome contact (e.g. grooming, sexual harassment, bullying, abuse of personal information and privacy) and inappropriate

conduct by children themselves (e.g. bullying, abuse of privacy). Here, it was suggested that policies aimed at monitoring and restricting access to such content, and at hindering children in producing such content, should be formulated. At the same time, it is important to move away from a risk perspective approach to the new technologies and to develop a more proactive policy agenda (Wall *et al.,* 2010c).

Another aspect related to media is how family life is represented in it, and the media's potential influence on thinking, values and behaviour (Livingstone & Das, 2010a). If, for example, having a family is represented in the media as a problem only, young cohorts may be influenced in their transition to parenthood by such negative images. The representation of elderly people may be a problem as well, because it can influence intergenerational relationships. A further example is the misrepresentation of ethnic minorities, which can intensify resentments of the societal majority.

3 Important research fields and methodological issues

3.1 General methodological remarks

Many issues relating to the subject-matter and methods of future research were raised during the FAMILYPLATFORM discussions. In order to avoid redundancies and due to their crosscutting characteristics, a brief overview of existing statistics at the EU level, general methodological issues, and what types of data are required is provided first, before discussing the main research areas and topics.

Available official European statistical data for family researchers

The main advantage of using official European statistics is that data provided by Eurostat is harmonised, representative and comparable as far as possible throughout the entire Union. The current legal framework enables access to anonymous Eurostat microdata for scientific purposes. At the European level, the following sources can be utilised by family researchers:

- LFS (Labour Force Survey);
- ECHP (European Community Household Panel), running from 1994-2001;
- EU-SILC (European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions);
- Eurobarometer Surveys;
- SHARE (Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe);
- ISSP (International Social Survey Programme);
- GGP (Generation and Gender Programme) and GGS (Generation and Gender Survey);
- EVS (European Value Study); and
- EES (European Social Survey).

The European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) is a quarterly, large-sample survey providing results for the population in private households in the EU, EFTA and the Candidate Countries. The survey is carried out at more or less the same time, using the same questionnaire, common classifications, and a single method of recording in all countries. In the context of family research,

some of the core variables, but also the LFS 2005 *ad hoc* module "Reconciliation between work and family life", are of special interest.

European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) is an instrument that aims to collect timely and comparable cross-sectional and longitudinal multi-dimensional microdata on income, poverty, social exclusion and living conditions. The starting date for the EU-SILC instrument was 2004 for the EU15, as well as for Estonia, Norway and Iceland. The 10 new member states, with the exception of Estonia, started in 2005. The instrument was also been implemented in Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Switzerland as of 2007. Social exclusion, information on housing and some income components are collected at the household level, while labour, education, health information and income are collected at very detailed component level. Furthermore, data on life satisfaction is obtained for individuals.

Each Standard Eurobarometer consists of approximately 1,000 face-to-face interviews per member state, except Germany (2,000), Luxembourg (500), and the United Kingdom (1,300 including 300 in Northern Ireland). In addition, Special Eurobarometer extensively addresses special topics such as family issues or gender roles. Flash Eurobarometers are *ad hoc* thematic telephone interviews that enable the Commission to obtain results relatively quickly and to focus on specific target groups. The qualitative Eurobarometer studies investigate the motivations, feelings and reactions of selected social groups towards a given subject or concept in depth. This is done by listening to and analysing their way of expressing themselves in discussion groups or with non-directive interviews. For example, in 2010 a qualitative Eurobarometer study survey was conducted into children's rights. The study was carried out among young people in all 27 member states and consisted of 170 focus groups.

The Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) is a multidisciplinary, longitudinal and cross-national study collecting microdata at the individual and household level in thirteen countries every other year. The first data collection took place in 2004. The health, social network and socio-economic situation of individuals aged 50 and over is the focus of the survey. SHARE is useful for family research, particularly on care and intergenerational solidarity and transfers.

The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) is a huge international comparative survey which began in 1984, when four countries took part. Over 40 are now part of it – and many European member states are included. The number of respondents ranges from 1,000 to 2,000 per country. The questionnaire is often fielded with other big national surveys. As the ISSP studies are designed to be replicated, comparisons between countries and across time are possible. There are a number of surveys, which are of interest for family research, such as "Social Networks and Support Systems" (repeated twice), "Social Inequality" (repeated four times), "Family and Changing Gender Roles" (repeated three times) or "Work Orientation" (repeated three times).

Another important data source for the analysis of family-related questions is the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP). It consists of contextual databases and the Generations and Gender Survey (GGS). The databases provide comparable information, for example on demography, economy, the labour market, childcare, education and taxes. The GGS is a panel study conducted in different European countries. For each of them, a nationally representative sample of the 18-79 year-old population is drawn (in some countries representative samples of the biggest immigrant group were also included). To analyse fertility processes, at least 3,000 women and 3,000 men of reproductive age (that is, between 18 and 44) are sampled. At least three panel waves with a three-year period in-between are planned. The first data collection took place in 2005. The survey focuses on, for example, gender relations, fertility and fertility intentions, health, value orientations and relationships between the generations.

The European Values Study (EVS), which dates from 1981, is a longitudinal survey that takes representative national samples of the adult population with a sample size of about 1,500 in each country. About 40 countries participate, and in total almost 70,000 Europeans have been interviewed. Up until now, four waves have been conducted, each with a nine-year interval between the surveys. Important topics of the EVS are wellbeing and life satisfaction, attitudes towards marriage, children, childcare, gender roles and similar aspects concerning the family. Information is also collected on work-related issues, religion, policies, moral attitudes, attitudes towards the environment and national identity.

The European Social Survey (ESS) collects representative cross-sectional data with a repeating design in about 30 countries for the last wave. It started in 2001 and is conducted every other year. A common questionnaire is used in all countries consisting of two parts: a core component and rotating modules. The core questionnaire covers subjective wellbeing, social exclusion, national identity, attitudes towards policies, trust in society and its institutions and socio-demographic aspects. The rotating modules have previously covered immigration and asylum issues, citizen involvement, health and care, economic morality, timing of key events in the life-course and attitudes. Additional topics were attitudes towards welfare and taxation, attitudes and experiences concerning ageism, trust in the police and courts, and the interconnection of work, family and wellbeing in the context of the latest recession.

From the point of view of family researchers, the official European statistical data suffers from the drawback that it ignores family relations and partnerships that extend beyond the household.

Thus, the data provided on a comparable EU level is not profound and differentiated enough to answer many of the research questions developed by FAMILYPLATFORM (e.g. legal family relationships, rare family forms; see 4). The less time a country has been a EU member, the more severe the lack of basic information. We must, therefore, encourage research in the new member states in particular, and think about more comprehensive integration of the candidate states in order to avoid a similar situation in the future. Existing, all-encompassing research should be extended and deepened.

New topics and common indicators in basic data

A wider range of basic statistics at the European level is needed for all, but especially for rare family forms, where basic information about proportion and socio-demographic background is lacking. Existing research is oriented rather to the nuclear family and largely ignores the increasing diversity of family forms and family relations (Kuronen, 2010). This is especially true for the different family forms. While some family forms (e.g. lone-parents, married couples with children and consensual unions with children) can be differentiated, important family characteristics concerning aspects like biological, legal and social parenthood are not collected. Moreover, the number of same-sex couples in the official European surveys is usually too small for detailed analysis.

Information is also lacking with regard to the development of family forms and transitions between them in respect of national and cultural differences. Here it was suggested that rare family forms in national and international surveys should be over-sampled. This is necessary for advanced methods to be applied and for answers to be found to the most important research questions, e.g. what types of inequality different family forms face. In order to achieve these aims, it is also necessary to overcome the prevalent household concept and to collect data at the individual, family and network levels, particularly in order to improve our understanding of relationships and support networks.

- We need to be able to analyse differences in qualifications, social classes and regional structures systematically. Adequate common indicators are needed for this.

- Basic statistics at the EU level should cover all age groups sufficiently to ensure that different cohorts are analysed. This is important for reaching conclusions on the process of (social) change over the generations and over time.

- To obtain an overview of migration flows, we need data to be collected at the EU level and not just at the national level. A new institution monitoring European migration processes would be very helpful in this context. This might identify different kinds of movements as well as background and areas of transnationalism.

- These studies have to be repeated over time with the same respondents to see developments and trends and to make it possible to look for effects of policies at the national and EU levels as well as to differentiate between effects of age, cohorts and time.

- Information has to be of sufficient depth to allow differentiation according to sub-national or regional levels.

At present, the level of information on these issues differs significantly between countries, so a strict application of common indicators is very important and should be made a precondition when designing studies at the EU or national level. As mentioned above, existing indicators need to be reviewed and new ones found to describe the situations of families and countries, addressing dimensions such as wellbeing, financial deprivation, education and different forms of inequality (e.g. not only income-based indicators or GDP; see Stiglitz *et al.,* 2009 for suggestions), as well as family forms and family networks. Additionally, existing typologies of welfare regimes have to be reconsidered, especially with regard to the new member and candidate states. Thus, we need a pool of advanced methodological approaches that is seen as a common standard. To realise these aims, a kind of institution that provides them would be very helpful – maybe this could also be done by Eurostat.

Each member of the family has their own position, roles, relationships to others and views on the family system, etc. Thus, research should encompass every position, especially when asking people what their needs and requirements are and what kind of support would be helpful. Therefore, the development of adequate and differentiated indicators of wellbeing is necessary in order to describe the reality of families more precisely, e.g. to describe dissolution, family as a network, and intergenerational relationships (Fleurbaey, 2008).

Methodological approaches

Current research is mainly static. As the dynamics of family life increases, lack of information on development processes becomes more of a problem. Hence, the need for more adequate measurements is growing as well. There is a need for scientific institutions at the national and EU levels to cope with the challenge of dynamics. However, it is clear that it is not possible to cover all research questions in this way. Ideally, strategies should contain large-scale representative data-sets accompanied by smaller in-depth studies.

In order to improve our general understanding of family, and to get an insight into its dynamics, we need more differentiated qualitative research, addressing transition processes in family life, for example. This means

- including both gender positions;

- taking the viewpoints of children and old people into account;
- focusing on decisions and their causes, using a process-related approach.

Possible examples of the above are qualitative studies in specific regions, for instance those with high or low fertility. Retrospective narrative inquiries that differentiate male and female points of view of couples and singles would contribute to a better understanding of postponement. Longitudinal studies addressing transitions and their effects, for example the impact of divorce on children's wellbeing, or the effects of different models of parenting, would help to gain insight into important family-life processes and their impacts (Thomson & Holland, 2003; Thomson *et al.,* 2003; Smith, 2003). Longitudinal studies should also be carried out in order to accompany migrants in their immigration and integration processes. Transition to grandparenthood is also of special importance, because we do not know enough about multigenerational relations and new kinds of intergenerational support patterns (Kuronen, 2010).

To gain a deeper insight into these fields, it is necessary to decide on the appropriate qualitative methods and limit different scientific approaches (Denzin & Lincoln, 2007; Flinders & Mills, 1993). Exploratory studies would sharpen our perceptions of rare family forms and how they live, as well as changes caused by transition, with a special focus on the children's perspective (Nele & Flowerdew, 2003).

In addition, the need for and usefulness of longitudinal studies should be discussed properly. On the one hand, they are ideal for understanding processes and their causes and impacts, but on the other hand, the costs are high, and it takes more time to obtain useful results. There is, thus, a risk that the results of such studies may not reflect social and political changes.

The extent to which it may be possible to engage in secondary-level analysis in order to make greater use of qualitative and especially qualitative longitudinal data should be investigated further and indeed encouraged. Some European countries (e.g. Austria, Denmark and Spain) already have qualitative data archives. Even if secondary analysis of qualitative material is uncommon, it can nevertheless be a good way of obtaining answers to research questions using existing in-depth research rather than generating new data (for a critical discussion, see Gillies & Edwards, 2005; Kelder, 2005; Thorne, 1999).

Target groups

Discussions during FAMILYPLATFORM, as well as the state of the art and critical review stages (Kuronen, 2010, Wall *et al.*, 2010c) reiterated the need to bring in children's points of view, which is indeed often missing in sociological research. We must therefore expand the scope of our work to incorporate research done by other disciplines, especially psychology and education, so that it embraces combinable information with a broader range of topics and also addresses the needs of younger children (Langsted, 2002). It is important to improve our understanding of how children live today, and of their wishes and experiences. This would help us to design better care solutions, improve societal and legal frameworks and the social system in general, and thereby contribute to the wellbeing of children and their families.

Adolescents and the elderly are additional target groups that should be researched to a far greater extent than they are today, and with more innovative approaches (Steele *et al.,* 2007).

Research on social innovations also needs to be improved. For many of the challenges discussed, we still have few ideas about how to solve them – for example what future care arrangements will look

like. Here we have to search for new models and to accompany them with research. This leads to a call for more evaluation of demonstration projects in many areas: e.g. work-life balance, care arrangements and custody arrangements. Additionally, we need scientific monitoring of innovative projects in empowerment and family education.

To sum up, there is a significant need for more advanced research methods. This means creating new indicators that provide better insights into the wellbeing of families in Europe, in line with the suggestions made in the Stiglitz Report (2009). There is a need for more variety in and creative mixture of research methods, especially on under-researched areas such as family empowerment or violence, which is largely affected by a high number of unreported cases. Here we need to find ways of gaining access to particular target groups, such as victims, perpetrators and minorities, and to decide on what types of research we will carry out. How can new media like the internet be used for research, and what alternatives do we have to (the different kinds of) surveys? What other indicators can we use to draw conclusions, for example court files and medical records?

To weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of each methodological approach thoroughly is the most important point of any research.

3.2   Family policy

Right from the start of FAMILYPLATFORM, family policies were seen as an existential field of research, and they are also increasingly considered a major policy field in European countries (Blum & Rille-Pfeiffer, 2010b). In this context, the main question is 'what governments do and why?' (Blum & Rille-Pfeiffer, 2010a: 66). To answer this question it is necessary to gain a deeper insight into policy development and decision-making processes and the norms and rules governing them, and to assess the influence of those who develop policy and make decisions, including research organisations and NGOs. To improve family policies, European countries should exchange information on the outcomes of different strategies applied in the many different frameworks that exist at national and sub-national levels.

The demands of family policy research are a major challenge because of the enormous heterogeneity of the European countries, in the same way that family policies vary in their degree of institutionalisation (Blum & Rille-Pfeiffer, 2010b; Bahle & Maucher, 1998). Additionally, they address a great variety of topics and aspects which are handled not only within so-called family policies but also mostly in different policy fields (economy, education, etc.). In this context, we can also see how policy decisions made in different policy fields have an unintended impact on families. Family policies in Europe have different normative backgrounds and historical developments alongside different models, ideals and cultures of support (Mühling, 2009). Thus, the first requirement of research is to provide an overview. Secondly, it is necessary to evaluate and test different family policies throughout Europe. And thirdly, research should incorporate the views of families and their representatives.

Monitoring European family policies

Against the aforementioned background, a basic problem is to provide an overview of family-related frameworks, laws and rules throughout the European nations. Some promising steps towards such an overview have been taken (e.g. the European Observatory on National Family Policies or the

Observatory on the Social Situation and Demography[9]), but they have led neither to ongoing monitoring nor to any visible change in conversation of national policies. Because of time lags and conceptual differences between these initiatives, they are of limited use only. But we should use existing work as far as possible when moving forward in order to get an idea of what has been done in the past. At present, the main source of information on family policies is the MISSOC tables (Mutual Information System on Social Protection in the Member States of the European Union)[10], covering all areas of social protection in the EU countries. While the Council of Europe Family Policy Database[11] and OECD Family Database[12] address important dimensions, they do not include all EU member states.

With regard to regional aspects, welfare systems and family policies in several Member States are significantly under-researched. This is especially true of the new members, but also of some older member states such as Denmark, Ireland and Portugal (Blum & Rille-Pfeiffer, 2010a: 62).

To understand how family policy structures affect family policies, the first step is to monitor – at every level. It is, therefore, necessary to build up a reliable overview of existing mechanisms and measures relating to family policies.

- Firstly, research has to be carried out on all members of EU27 to obtain an overview of their present status with regard to family policies. Ideally, this should also cover candidate states.

- Secondly, we should find out what each member state's intentions are and how they relate to EU goals.

- Thirdly, we should look at how cultural background factors such as attitudes and norms influence the development of national policies. There are different ideals of family (e.g. nuclear vs. plural family) and different traditions in dealing with family-related political issues, e.g. pro-natalism, gender equality objectives, and different models of motherhood and fatherhood.

- Future research has to take into account the fact that relevant policy strategies (e.g. the provision of childcare facilities) cannot be located at a national level but at communal or regional level. Greater differentiation will be required.

- Referring to different social security schemes in EU countries, we have to reconsider existing typologies, and analyse the different types of normative background with regard to different institutional frameworks (e.g. whether or not there is a government department responsible for family affairs, or whether responsibility is spread across various departments).

- As political strategies change at different rates, comparative and longitudinal studies should examine the differing effects of stable and changing family policy regimes. In this context, there is a need to understand how different institutional family policy structures (e.g.

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[9]   http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=676&langId=en [accessed 18/03/2011]
[10]   http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/soc-prot/missoc98/english/f_main.htm [accessed 18/03/2011]
[11]   http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/familypolicy/database/default_en.asp [accessed 18/03/2011]
[12]   http://www.oecd.org/document/4/0,3746,en_2649_34819_37836996_1_1_1_1,00.html [accessed 18/03/2011]

whether or not there is a specialised government department) influence the outcome of the policy.

Monitoring does not simply mean summing up existing policy strategies. All relevant policy areas have to be taken into account, and discrepancies between different political fields need to be analysed. Because family affairs touch upon every area of politics and society, other relevant policy fields - for example health and occupational policies - have to be taken into account, too. It is a major challenge to define what measures should be researched and where the inner circle of family policies ends. Therefore, we need a common definition of what constitutes "family policy" (Bahle & Maucher, 1998). To the extent that many policy measures concern the management of families and their resources, a broad view of the political framework is required, including, for example, employment and educational policies and the organisation of welfare systems.

To measure the impact of different policies more precisely, consensual criteria (common indicators on family forms, relationships, financial deprivation and education) and new categories of policy interventions and means are needed. This would in turn enable the comparison of mechanisms and effects.

As comparisons are mostly made using macro-quantitative methods, there is a need for additional research of a smaller and qualitative design. This could be used to sharpen "the view for historical development" (Bahle & Pfenning, 2000: 3), as well as to understand specific details.

Comparative evaluation and testing of policy strategies can highlight the effects of different policy strategies, for example tax or cash benefits, different leave-schemes or care provisions.

A special form of monitoring is provided by calculation models. These show the various available mechanisms (e.g. remuneration replacements such as parental pay) and make it possible to record their effects on different family constellations. Calculation models help to assess the effects of changing measures, for example on the material situation, thereby uncovering related structures of inequality, as well as any unintended effects. Instruments of this kind have already been used at the national level, for example with regard to the consequences of increased tax allowances for children, and they could be introduced in a similar way at the EU level. This would enable us to monitor which measures are advantageous to particular family forms and which are not (for example, standard marital status tax relief as opposed to individual taxation), and thereby to study their effects on social inequality. These models could also be used to evaluate to what extent people adjust their behaviour to different measures. In this context, it is necessary to focus not only on material effects but also on equal opportunities and gender equality effects.

In order to make family policies more sustainable, policies should take future trends into account. Research in this field is already being done in some spheres, for example demographic development. Existing approaches to modelling future trends could be extended to other research fields by doing more surveys on future prospects.

Evaluation of policies

Evaluation of policies has been called for in almost every policy field and research area, as well as at every level. It is true that we have very few evaluations of national policies and even fewer at the

European level. Even existing scientific knowledge and empirical data only rarely finds its way into legislation, especially with regard to the outcome of bargaining processes. We know some of the reasons for these trends:

- Information is often lacking or unreliable, and often does not cover representative groups, areas, or nations;

- Results, findings or interpretations which vary according to different theoretical, methodological, cultural, normative or regional backgrounds;

- Results that are "bought", i.e. where government departments fund research.

Major problems arise not just for lack of data and from differences of interpretation, but also because of the different ways in which policy makers handle available information. When calling for more research and more evaluation, the priority must be to deal with this problem. If this is not done, evaluation work will have no impact on policies. The first step to more effective evaluation is to carefully select the persons or organisations entrusted with the work and to define how policy makers deal with the results. Regular exchange of information and establishment of mixed institutions consisting of researchers, stakeholders and politicians may help to remove barriers such as different languages and to ensure transfer of knowledge.

The second step is to think about the longer term (Wall *et al.*, 2010c): people seldom wait for changes in legislation or support to make their plans and choices (e.g. family formation). They often react with a time lag. Sometimes they make a small change in order to obtain some additional advantages and avoid disadvantages or because they are unsure about a new situation. Additionally, we have to face the fact that people – and especially younger people – do not ask what the concrete rights and legal outcomes of their decisions will be. For example, only few people study the legal implications of marriage and divorce before they become engaged. When we ask for evaluation, we have to ask for prior knowledge of rights and entitlements. And we have to ask whether policies make the citizens concerned better informed or not. Furthermore, people sometimes do not realise what areas of life will be affected by a change of policy – for example, allowances and custody after divorce. Evaluation of policy has to take into account how much people know and how long it will take for information to be disseminated throughout society as well as how relevant it is actually. Hence it is clear that some changes in policies have a longer-term impact, while others influence people's behaviours quite quickly. Evaluation has to take these aspects into account and to explain why these differences arise. To clarify the impact of family policies, changes in other political fields have to be kept in mind, as the impact of policies in one field could be diminished or thwarted by those in other political domains. Cross-cutting effects should, therefore, be examined with care.

Thirdly, when an evaluation of policy mechanisms and their (longitudinal) effects is sought, policies have to be valid for a longer period. This is also true for associated policy fields. Thus a serious evaluation must be able to rely on a stable legal framework for the necessary duration of its studies. Moreover, it is important to start the evaluation process before the new measure comes into force, if there is to be any hope of identifying the effects of the new legislation.

Fourthly, and as mentioned above, evaluation has to take into account the variety of social situations (family forms, family phases, social groups, etc.) because outcomes and scientific recommendations will vary accordingly.

Fifthly, benchmarking of family-friendliness indices should be introduced at a European level (Blum & Rille-Pfeiffer, 2010b) in order to show how family-friendly different nations or regions are.

Because calls for evaluation come up against these major challenges, they often seem to struggle with reality. But if all relevant actors are aware of the problems, possible solutions will be found more easily: these could take the form of smaller steps such as concentrating on small target groups or narrower policy areas, learning by doing, and finding better ways of interaction.

Before evaluations are carried out, decisions are required, in the light of policy priorities, on what type of evaluation is preferred (on formative and summative evaluation, see e.g. Sager, 2009; Wholey, 1996; Chambers, 1994):

- Formative evaluation is appropriate for new or renewed policies (or strategies). It might be carried out on a small or large demonstration project, and might relate to one or many special social groups. All such aspects, intentions, target groups and expected outcomes have to be explained and recorded in detail. The next step is to choose the methodology best suited to the research question. This includes the decision on which persons, groups, etc. should be covered by the research. Preliminary indicators of positive effects have to be discussed with specific reference to previously defined objectives after the first period. A group of relevant actors may then decide to change the project or not, and the next evaluation cycle begins. The process of formative evaluation can be carried out several times or for a fixed period, at the end of which final conclusions can be drawn and implemented. Formative evaluation allows us to react fairly quickly, despite the risk of over or underestimating effects as a result of short observation periods. It is appropriate for smaller, limited strategies rather than for broader policies.

- Summative evaluation tests outputs. In evaluations of this type we look at stated policy objectives and try to find measurements that tell us whether the objectives have been reached and what other effects have been observed. One significant problem in family policy is that objectives may not be defined very precisely, and ways of fulfilling those objectives are not always clear. What is to be done, for example, to provide support to children in large families? Give those families more money, lower their taxes, or provide free access to education or care facilities? Outcomes will vary according to the kind of support we choose to provide. Lower taxation, for example, might have no perceived effect on the family, or be unrelated to the number of children in it. More prior research is required, as mentioned above, to understand the possible effects on different social groups, etc.

The example also highlights the fact that research and policy making have to interact from the outset in order to develop a precise outline of intended effects and mechanisms implemented, and to reach consensus in clarifying the question. This might be one way of obtaining reliable information.

Time frames also have to be taken into account. Summative evaluation is time-consuming, because it needs to keep track of possible effects. This is a disadvantage, because policy is not able to react quickly to unintended effects (Weiss, 1999). The benefit of this method is that the results are clearer and more reliable.

Including the voice of families and their representatives

In addition to these research strategies, it is also necessary to listen regularly to the voices of politicians, as well as those of family members and their representatives in order to be able to bring their wishes and needs into the process of policy formation. This could be done, for example, by means of direct representative data collection, but here again, every family member should be taken into account.

Another way of structuring policies in a family-friendly way is to bring in experts and representatives from family associations with different backgrounds in the policy making process. Several methods can be used to collate this expert or specialist knowledge, for example Delphi and group discussions, as well as qualitative interviews.

In general, knowledge transfer between research and policy making should be improved through continual exchange. Thus, there is a need to understand how family organisations on different levels can contribute to the policy making. "Concerning the very important inclusion of other family policy actors, there is a lack of knowledge, although especially the government-NGO relations are a very important topic" (Blum & Rille-Pfeiffer, 2010a: 63).

Means and models of participation need to be developed at all political levels (communal, regional, national and EU), especially for the inclusion of family associations. In some fields (e.g. family education), politicians and organisations often work hand in hand. In others, we find a lack of participation. So we need to work out how to achieve effective participation and ensure that families are heard. Research is needed on how to organise such processes and devise methods of incorporating the knowledge of people working with families on a day-to-day basis. One way of doing this might be to explore those fields where there already is effective participation, in addition to finding and testing new methods of participation.

While family policy research should rely on forecasting, it "should not be limited to 'the power of the factual'" (Schubert & Blum, 2010 quoted in Blum & Rille-Pfeiffer, 2010a: 64). The feasibility of policies has to be researched, too. Effective consultation on policy would be fostered by a "platform between policies and research, which builds on a sustainable basis and a bottom-up, pluralist approach" (*ibid.*: 64).

Family education and empowerment

Over the past few years family education[13] has become an important field, both for policy making and for NGOs who work in this area. Family education is planned and organised at various levels (Rupp, 2003), sometimes as part of national policy, but more often as part of local policies. As a result, many different institutions are involved. It is difficult to get an overview of strategies and activities, but extremely important to do so, especially on local practices and the role of NGOs in local policies (Kuronen, 2010).

Family education is of growing importance as family life has become ever more varied and dynamic in the wake of societal changes. Demands on parents in relation to the upbringing and education of children have, at the same time, increased greatly (Rupp *et al.*, 2010; Klepp *et al.,* 2008). One example, in which there is a great deal of variation across families, is the importance of promoting children's school performance. Individual family biographies differ, particularly in terms of their educational background and (financial) resources (Wissenschaftlicher Beirat für Familienfragen, 2005).

On the one hand, this aspect is part of the biography and constellations of the family: family is the place where childhood development predominantly takes place. Most parents are aware of the great responsibility they are carrying in this regard (Rupp *et al.,* 2010). Sometimes this knowledge leads to uncertainty (Klepp *et al.*, 2008), which is intensified by the public/media-based discussion of the achievements and blunders of families. Important questions, therefore, are how parents deal with

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[13]   Family education in this context is to be understood as information, support and low-level teaching for parents.

this situation and how they can find their own way to information and decisions, or "how media can be a tool in order to help parents in parenthood" (Wall *et al.,* 2010c: 109). One central as well as action-oriented concern is what types of support each family needs, depending on their specific context ,or the transition they are in, and how they can make best use of this support.

On the other hand, socio-economic factors, as well as other specific criteria that characterise real family life, should be taken into account as starting points or distinguishing features. With respect to the concept of benefits in terms of empowerment, it is also important that the central recipients of family services are adults who – as self-acting learners – participate actively in an educational process. In this context, conceptual research is necessary to develop target group-related proceedings and didactics.

With reference to the shaping of the activities and benefits offered, the question arises about the extent to which they satisfy the criteria of prevention, accessibility and needs as defined by the respective families. A great variety of family services is available: the spectrum ranges from courses with a fixed curriculum taught by specialists to informal exchanges between parents, children and others, based on opportunity structures (Rupp *et al.,* 2010). Up till now, there has been little empirical evidence or data on the accuracy or fitness and acceptance of support by specific types of families (Lösel, 2006). It is crucial to include the family-specific, demand-oriented point of view derived from a sensitive approach when developing criteria and content for family information.

In order to judge the demand side more adequately and to understand needs, it is necessary to study the parents, and particularly their interests and preferences, with regard to potential support. Direct surveys will, however, not provide all the required results. Differentiated exploratory studies are therefore recommended in order to evaluate the necessary differentiation among the population. The findings should be tested in pilot projects and used to develop best-practice models for different family situations and circumstances.

Support initiatives have to be made available to families within their social environment, to provide a complete range of services. Social group analyses, studies of target group-specific opportunity structures and preferred use are therefore needed. Furthermore, the question arises as to what extent it is possible to create networks within the spectrum of support, since this is of the utmost importance for the sustainability of the assistance provided.

It is a great shortcoming in the field of family education that a theoretical concept of the research area has been missing so far, while a lot of initiatives and activities are to be found in practice. For instance, there is neither a consistent definition of family education nor an adequate quality standard (Rupp *et al.*, 2010). Theoretical and conceptual efforts have to be made in this regard. Subsequently, standardised measures can be used to obtain data from a larger sample.

3.3   Care

Increased awareness of population ageing has led to an elevation in the importance of policies concerning care (Kuronen, 2010). In addition, the subject of care evolved to be a topic of major concern among the participants of FAMILYPLATFORM as well. Care relations involve different actors from within families and from external providers. There are various recipients with a wide range of individual needs and abilities, and care is influenced by existing regulations and policy schemes. Care is usually seen as practical help for frail elderly people or for the upbringing of children. For this agenda, however, it is necessary to broaden that view and see that care is much more than just physical support in everyday life. Care can also be viewed as general assistance, as in providing an environment to live in and develop, in which general wellbeing is fostered. Thus it is important to

extend the focus to adjunct areas besides the obvious acts of physical care, while at the same time it is necessary to concentrate on exemplary issues. As a result, future research demands focus on specific issues which were of particular concern during FAMILYPLATFORM meetings.

Several background variables determine the situation of care recipients and care providers. Demographic change is one of the major developments that has an impact on care. The 'ageing of societies' leads to increased demand for care and increased responsibilities for care providers. Due to the increasing number of frail elderly people, care deficits are likely to arise (Hoffer, 2010). The same is true for childcare as an effect of rising female employment. Up until now, institutionalised care systems have not been sufficiently equipped to handle the demand for care services with differences existing between the EU member states.

Furthermore, changing norms and role models affect systems of family care. The characteristics of family forms that have evolved or grown in scope during recent decades have to be taken into account. Care is still a highly gendered area, with women carrying out most of the related tasks. Due to changes in gender roles and the rising participation of women in the workforce, however, they have to manage paid work, family chores and care provision. Yet it is not enough to concentrate on this imbalance from the women's point of view. It is also necessary to consider men's (lack of) involvement and the corresponding reasons.

Together with these differences in the family structure, a new diversity of norms regarding care for children and the elderly and a different valuation of family care has led to new family care arrangements. Hence, there is rising demand for home-care, but a varying degree of familial obligation to care throughout Europe (Tarricone & Tsouros, 2008).

In addition to this, *globalised structures* have influenced and continue to have an effect on individual lives, family structures and family functioning. National economies have to adjust their responses to global crises, with the result that there are insecurities in relation to the long-term funding of policies and these insecurities are distributed unequally (Mills & Blossfeld, 2005). Member states' involvement in social welfare varies, and national finances also differ greatly. Some states will have greater difficulty than others in providing financial support for individuals in general, which also affects assistance in the broad area of care. At the individual level, insecurities in the labour market make it unavoidable for many families to have two incomes rather than just one provided by a single breadwinner. Moreover, opportunities for re-entry into the labour market after leave periods (particularly parental leave) differ between EU countries. Depending on how policies are designed, re-entry into the labour market may be particularly difficult for women. This is all the more serious if the family depends on the extra income. Moreover, women invest in their education and want to work (Hakim, 2000). Even though women are encouraged to be financially independent, their priorities still seem to be centred on care-giving (Dyke & Murphy, 2006). Reconciliation of work and family, however, is not always easy to achieve. Negotiating care is therefore an additional burden, especially for women.

Another important aspect of care at the political level is the way states and governments 'think' about care: this influences policies directly, and thus affects the wellbeing of families. There are differences regarding the extent to which informal care work (and housework) contribute to GDP. While some scientists argue that it is not possible to adequately measure the value of informal work like housework, varying forms of care, etc. (e.g. Chadeau, 1992), others keep suggesting the need to do so in order to provide policy makers with sufficient information (van den Berg *et al.,* 2004). However, people who stop working or reduce their working hours in order to take care of children, the disabled, the terminally ill, the frail or others who need assistance not only lose their income, but also have a negative influence on the productivity of the national economy. Because care activities are not included in GDP, their contribution to the national economy is lost. Having carers who opt

out of paid work also leads to lower income tax revenue, and states might have to pay out higher amounts of income support for carers who are missing their original income from paid work. In the long run, carers are likely to have lower incomes due to missed opportunities and a less favourable employment history. This is true for childcare, care for the elderly, and any other kind of care relation where individuals reduce or give up their employment in order to provide for someone (Access Economics, 2010). This disadvantage directly affects the economic situation of the carer's family and is thus linked to the greater issue of family wellbeing.

3.3.1   Evaluating the current care situation in Europe

A first step towards collecting further information on future demands for care should be an evaluation of current care schemes of the EU27. A question often asked by existing researchers is whether it is still possible to identify country clusters or welfare regimes (Kuronen, 2010). More information is needed on regional, national and cultural differences and to understand what kind of country clusters and welfare regimes we have in Europe. Is the old idea of three regimes, liberal, conservative, and social-democratic, still working, or do we need more nuanced divisions such as a division into five regions, Nordic countries, Southern countries, Continental countries, the UK and other "liberal" welfare models, and Central and Eastern European or post-socialist countries? The goal here should be to broaden existing knowledge (e.g. Anttonen & Sipilä, 1996; Bettio & Plantenga, 2004) in a comparative design for all member states. Which care arrangements are supported by European welfare regimes? What is the proportion of family vs. professional care provision? Are there any changing trends over time?

Distinction between forms of care as a prerequisite for research

Distinctions must be made between childcare, care for the elderly, assistance to people who are (temporarily) ill or otherwise in need of assistance or caring for persons with disabilities, because policies and support systems will vary accordingly. Additionally, each group is characterised by different individual circumstances and needs. Research should ideally be of a longitudinal design in order to go beyond the basic observation of country-specific models. In order to assess the full scope of policy effects, it is necessary to use life-course approaches to study effects on family wellbeing.

Comparison of existing schemes and state support across EU member states

Once the basic knowledge on care arrangements and care schemes throughout Europe has been obtained, its use for comparative purposes may provide information for optimising existing schemes. Such a comparison would have to consider various aspects and cross-cutting topics: one has to differentiate between the various member states and between urban and rural areas in the analysis of trends in care arrangements. On this basis, one can study the similarities and differences found in family types and socio-economic backgrounds throughout the EU27. Subsequently, the types of state support and the preconditions for receiving support should be compared. This could lead to best practice models.

Care provision by state programmes and the private sector

State programmes such as alternative military or voluntary service also shape the landscape of care provision. The existence or non-existence of such programmes affects national attitudes to care-givers, whether participation is optional or mandatory (also considering differences between the sexes) and in what actual positions people complete their alternative military or community service. As other ways of providing care personnel exist, a comparison between the strategies of the member

states would serve as the basis for further analyses. It is important to determine whether there are institutionalised community service programmes or whether care is left completely to the private sector. Or to put it differently: to what extent do governments take responsibility on the supply side of care? Are welfare regimes prepared to take care of those individuals who have no other care resources left (e.g. the growing number of childless persons)?

Perception of childcare as a care task or an educational assignment

A general childcare-related question is whether it is perceived as a care task or as an educational assignment: whether care is seen more as attending to children's needs or as educating them. An investigation into various aspects of childcare (safety and security, healthy emotional and physical development, education and learning, etc.) among European countries may lead to an identification of different positions in the EU27 and the optimisation of existing models. To what extent can existing policy schemes be traced back to the country-specific image of childcare?

Ability to reconcile employment and care: policies and strategies

It has already been mentioned that employment is a major family responsibility. Other obligations have to be negotiated in accordance with the specific employment arrangements in each family. The ability to reconcile care and paid work also depends on the flexibility of employers and on welfare systems in general. It is therefore necessary to ascertain whether employment laws and employers´ strategies grant the flexibility that would enable employees to reconcile their work with their family care activities. Do employers recognise familial care obligations as a legitimate reason for a change in the employment relationship? As policies and regulations determine the leeway for family members to manage paid and unpaid work, an examination of the most important measures could help to facilitate reconciliation. One possible way of facilitating this compatibility between work and care in the life course might be a social innovation such as 'time care insurance' or a 'time credit account', including an amount of years that could be taken to care for others (Kapella *et al.*, 2011).

Valuation of home-care across EU member states

It is also necessary to think about the valuation of care when family members give up employment to care for dependent relatives. An examination of how home-care is valued by state policies is needed. Since care-giver remuneration can be used as a yardstick for valuation, policies can be compared: is the care-giver compensated for missing income and social security contributions (e.g. health insurance)? Do money transfers from welfare insurance differ if care is provided by a family member as opposed to a professional or institutionalised service provider? This aspect should also be analysed with regard to differences between member states: they might have different approaches to permitted applications of state benefits.

EU member states' responses to the international migration process of care workers

Considering the growing care gap, questions arise concerning international care worker migration. It might be more efficient – or perhaps even the only solution – to pay a migrant care-giver instead of reducing the family income by having one family member opt out of employment. This topic will be difficult to work on, however, because a part of these arrangements is actually illegal. Nevertheless, the mechanisms behind care migration have to be studied, including push and pull factors as explanatory aspects. The living and working conditions of migrant care workers as well as the legal aspects of their residence and employment status could be compared at a European level. To some extent there are problems in rendering this care legal. How can policies facilitate this? On the demand side, the reasons for families employing a migrant worker for care purposes have to be

analysed. How can state welfare support assist families sufficiently so that (illegal) employment of migrant care workers can be made redundant?

Impact of (home) care on the wellbeing of care-givers and their families across Europe

Even though a dual obligation as employee and care-giver does not necessarily have negative effects on the individual (Martire & Stephens, 2003), the workload of familial carers needs to be considered. Thus, for example, the effects on the care-giver's health need to be monitored. Stress, depression, physical injury or lack of sleep influence the carer's wellbeing (Access Economics, 2010), which also affects his or her family environment as well as the relationship with the care recipient. An examination of the wellbeing of care-givers and its concrete influence on the wellbeing of the family should be carried out in a comparative perspective. This would help to answer the question of how care-givers feel about their role. Additionally, it could be established whether the family's wellbeing in different countries is equally dependent on the individual wellbeing of the carer or if there are intermediating factors. If the wellbeing of the care-giver is improved, it is to be expected that the family's wellbeing rises as well. How can the wellbeing of families be optimised by assisting care-givers in their tasks?

In particular, gender is a variable that needs to be considered, due to the greater involvement of women in family tasks and increasing rates of female employment (Kuronen, *et al.,* 2010b). Thus, women carry a heavier burden of obligations. The gender aspect will be looked at in more detail in the final section.

Individual motives and decision-making processes in care provision

It seems fairly obvious that parents take care of their children and partners take care of each other in case of illness. The intergenerational familial bond may be reason enough for relatives to care for the elderly but, on the other hand, this dynamic may also be determined by a feeling of responsibility rather than choice. To clarify this, the motives for taking responsibility and providing care in a changing Europe have to be examined. The aspects of altruism, the expectation of remuneration and legal protection for familial care-givers should be taken into consideration. In respect of the latter, we should also ask how well EU citizens are informed about their nation-specific care regimes. Taking a deeper look into the decision-making processes in care arrangements means analysing how the arrangements are decided upon in different situations: do recipients and providers decide on alternatives together? Are care arrangements negotiated according to the same prerequisites as couples negotiate the division of household labour and paid work? The answers to these questions may contribute to a higher quality of care, the overall living environment and individual and family wellbeing.

Care provision and dissemination of information on innovative forms of care

In order to consider future care situations, research on new forms of public support and attitudes towards shaping one's life in old age need to be evaluated. This includes ideas on new forms of old-age housing and mixed-age communities, where the elderly are assisted by their younger housemates. The availability of these forms of living says nothing about whether elderly people are open to such a living arrangement or to which groups of elderly this would apply. Would they even want to participate in these new forms of housing, or would they just do it to avoid having to move into a conventional retirement home?

This subject area is closely connected with the views and wishes of elderly care recipients. It is doubtful, however, whether they are informed about care innovations or whether they have access

to them. In rural areas, for example, there might be a completely different information supply and support network.

Focusing more on technical innovations and developments in the provision of care, it is important to find out how the knowledge and actual support can be made available to the care recipient. For the elderly, in particular, it should be analysed how they may use modern technology and media, e.g. the possibilities of new forms of sheltered housing support services. They often want to remain independent, and new developments can assist them in doing so. The best ways of informing them about the possibilities have to be found. An analysis of existing procedures could lead to best practice models. But how can they be widely disseminated and mainstreamed? In this context, policies at the EU, national and local levels are important supporting or limiting factors.

3.3.2   Reconstructing the views of care-givers

As a general approach, the evaluation of the societal acceptance of institutional care vs. family/home-care across EU countries can map the attitudes of the population of each member state to the appropriate forms of care provision. It is vital, however, to distinguish between different types of care recipients in such a project. It is very likely that different attitudes will prevail not only with regard to day-care for children, but also to the care of the frail elderly or people with disabilities, an area in which attitudes may tend to favour institutionalised care. There may be underlying concepts of putting people into professional environments who do not fit the image of a well-functioning family (one example was Ireland's structure of containment facilities; see Smith, 2007). Such attitudes may predict the susceptibility of a population to alternative policy schemes.

An evaluation of the attitudes of European citizens in an international comparison of designated care-givers will be a first major step towards understanding underlying care concepts. Such an approach would have to incorporate an assessment of prevailing beliefs and role models. They shape the underlying context in which the actual care relationship is built. Institutionalised day-care for children might become more acceptable, whereas the feeling of obligation for care for the elderly might decline. The motivation to engage in care for the elderly might be shifting, because people have other priorities in life as compared to fifty years ago. In particular, the concept of the housewife of the mid-20th Century has lost it's influence, so that any additional family obligation competes with other responsibilities essential to maintain a family's financial resources and its wellbeing. A study oriented towards the field of intergenerational transfers, focusing on motivational aspects, could provide insight into whether individuals still feel obliged to take care of family members (in return for support received). The willingness to take on care responsibilities and subjective restrictions should be analysed. The kinship of the care-giver to the recipient may have an influence on the type of care people are willing to provide. In addition, the research agenda should establish whether and how the motivation to care for dependents has changed over time.

Even though the breadwinner-homemaker family model still exists, there is a great variety of different family forms and constellations – some created by choice, some by necessity. It is important to consider these family formations as major aspects whenever any study of care is carried out. Relevant questions concern the best care arrangements (providing and receiving) for each of the various family forms. In addition, certain state support policies may be beneficial for one family form but could disrupt the functioning of another. The characteristics of families as providers of safe environments, support and opportunities for development need to be considered when trying to find appropriate assistance for familial care-givers. The same must be kept in mind regarding individuals or families in need of assistance.

Combining home-care and professional support

The way potential care providers feel about caring with regard to certain care needs is an important question that is closely connected with the quality of the care relationship and co-operation between the family itself and professional care services. Might some care tasks be better provided by professionals? And might other tasks be better managed and organised if left solely to the family? There are many uncertainties as to how easily family care can be negotiated and combined with professional services. It depends on two aspects requiring further research: on the one hand, how flexibly can care professionals react in helping out when families are unable to provide care due to some emergency? And on the other hand, how do carers handle the bureaucratic effort of organising professional care (and welfare support)?

Requirements for care-givers

Families have always functioned as first-choice providers of care. It is not intended to undermine their abilities or question their competence. Yet it seems their work has been rather taken for granted. Questioning the extent to which families can provide or feel comfortable with providing care – if at all – would appear to be a new approach. In that sense, we may ask whether families can actually provide better care than professionals, and should then explain why that could be true. It is often assumed that there is an emotional and biological bond between family members. Does this bond really exist and does it justify approaching family members first? Does this bond help in the everyday provision of care?

With regard to care for elderly family members, it is highly likely that care arrangements will intrude into the personal sphere, be it in simple decisions such as deciding on the time a person gets up or matters of personal hygiene. The relationship between relatives is likely to change fundamentally – a change which might very well be more perceptible to the care recipient. While some care recipients may feel more comfortable with a close family member providing care, others may be more reluctant due to a crossing of personal boundaries. How do care-givers feel about getting involved in personal care and how do they cope with the situation?

Safeguarding quality standards by adapting familial environments

Significant arguments for family care include the avoidance of relocation of care recipients, especially of elderly people, and the provision of care for them within the comfort of their own home. Concentrating on special needs in the care of the elderly, disabled or sick individuals, the following questions arise: what kind of care can be provided in a familial environment, and what alterations are needed (e.g. changes to the structure of buildings to allow barrier-free access, modification of bathrooms, special or custom-made constructions like beds or other appliances to enable or assist actual care activities, etc.)? Alterations to the living environment are expensive. The question is whether it is feasible and affordable to carry out such changes. Furthermore, it is necessary to assess to what extent care-givers have to adapt to the care situation, both mentally and physically.

Care quality training for familial care-givers

So far, there has not been very much education or training in the area of home-care – no matter whether for children or for the elderly. The quality of care should be a major concern. A solid foundation is needed to decide whether more education is necessary, the extent to which family members are already trained to care, and whether they wish to undergo examinations in such training. This should be done, for example, for (first-time) parents, to give them the ability to ensure

their children's healthy development. When carers need help, for example to find out how to handle children's education, or progressing dementia, do they consult professionals?

When illnesses are being treated, or a family is coping with restrictions caused by disabilities, it is likely that professional advice will have been given at some stage. Yet it is unclear whether this advice is followed, or even if it is still appropriate – especially when a care episode lasts for a longer period of time. It is questionable whether untrained familial care providers can respond to the needs of various kinds of care recipients that may well require knowledge in the area of anatomy, physiotherapy and health care. Professional advice could help here. The extent to which families can benefit from continuous support from professionals in order to enhance their care abilities should be assessed. To what extent do untrained family members provide proper care?

Further questions relating to the quality of care include ideas on standards for familial care. It is crucial to differentiate between different types of care activities in terms of the quality of care. Are care-recipients able to articulate the full scope of the care measures they need? Carers require information about what they should do and how they should do it. Where do they get it? How can they be supported in managing their own care activities and the assistance of care professionals, physiotherapists, etc.? This is connected to how familial carers can best work together with medical service providers and care professionals. What incentives do care-givers have to provide good care and do they reflect on their activities? The social background of the care-giver may have a major impact on these questions.

The familial relationship with the care recipient is particularly important for those who care for the elderly, the disabled and the sick, because of the changing relationships deriving from the new dependency of the care recipient. It is assumed that the relationship determines the aims and quality of the care provided. The mechanism behind this is still unclear. On this basis, we may ask whether changes in the relationship affect the care provided.

Impact of care situations on the wellbeing of care-givers

Apart from technical and practical abilities, it is crucial to examine how far familial care providers are prepared for coping with stress and also the physical, mental and emotional demands deriving from the care relationship. Once again, it is important to differentiate and analyse different types of stress in different types of care situations, which also depend on the characteristics of the care receiver. In particular, the feeling of being overburdened, (psychological) strains, coping mechanisms and opportunities to stand back (temporarily) from care obligations should all be analysed. We should study all EU member states to see whether there are any respite services or other support programmes for carers and how well informed (potential) care-givers are about their availability.

The double burden of the sandwich generation

The middle generation needs to be looked at specifically in connection with the burden on families. Middle-aged individuals who have to raise children while they may already have to take care of their own parents are in a particularly difficult situation. There have been attempts at collecting comparative European data (e.g. SHARE) to obtain information on intergenerational relationships. Some questions, e. g. the number of carers in Europe having to bear a double burden, are fairly easy to answer. Other questions, however, may call for more data. They concern the management of responsibilities, how the situation of double care affects carers, external sources of support, and differences between the member states.

Informal networks may help to ease the burden of family care. In this context, network analyses, for example studies on neighbourhood relationships, could identify and evaluate additional sources of support for carers.

Impact of home-care on family organisation and family wellbeing

Given that the majority of family care-givers are female, the primary focus should be on women's wellbeing. Yet it is also important to consider the family as a whole, in which female wellbeing is just one determinant of family wellbeing. It would be wrong to assume that men are generally satisfied with providing for a family's income. In examining a (temporary) single-earning household, one might find that the earner was under significant pressure. A holistic approach to family wellbeing would respect individual resources and the wishes of family members, as well as support the family in organising itself according to its members' wishes.

Another aspect of wellbeing is the management of family life. Families might need assistance in the organisation of care in general. Caring for someone also affects overall family dynamics. Since existing structures have to be changed, one might ask just how the family as a whole is affected by the care relationship. What happens to the family if a care-intensive person either lives in the family or is taken into the family home? The relations between care recipient, other residents and other family members (parents, children, and others) should also be examined. Reliable and comparable measures for individual (care-giver and care recipient) and family wellbeing would need to be developed.

The task of family carers becomes even more difficult when caring for someone who is suffering from a fatal disease. How do carers cope with the emotional strain of providing care and being faced with the certain death of the person they care for? Professional assistance may help in such a situation. In this case we need to know what kind of help is provided to familial carers in the different member states.

Financial impact of care on family resources

The process of globalisation and individualisation, together with changing norms and role models, also affects the familial system with regard to the provision of care. A major aspect of familial wellbeing is financial resources. When approaching the subject of financial deprivation in relation to care-giving, the interconnections of family wellbeing, employment and familial (care) tasks can be investigated. Since most families rely on dual-earner income, in many cases one family member will have to opt out of paid employment to provide care. In such cases there is a reduction in financial resources. Raising children demands financial resources because quality clothing, food and education (including books, visits to parks, museums, theatre, etc.) are relatively expensive. The costs of care for the elderly may have an even greater influence on the family and the familial transfer network. What happens to the (economic) wellbeing of a family when a family member gives up a job in order to care for children or the elderly? And, related to this, how do such families manage ordinary and additional costs of care? How many families are threatened by poverty as a result of providing care? Here, the member states can support families: what kind of transfer payments are offered by the different countries?

Since the costs of care are proportionate to savings and inheritance, there are bound to be changes in future intergenerational monetary transfers. This is an adjunct topic that deserves further investigation.

3.3.3   Reconstructing the views, wishes and needs of care recipients

In moving towards sustainable concepts of care, it is essential to incorporate the views of the care recipients themselves. Care ethics and the right of each individual to lead a self-determined life call for recognition of care recipients' views and wishes. This issue will be examined in the following sections for the four types of care receivers, as defined previously.

There are certain standards that have to be met when it comes to care. For early childcare, these might be related to medical and developmental matters. For care for the elderly and the care of ill or disabled individuals, it is not only a question of responding to individual care needs. Medical services, as well as practical tasks like feeding, doing the laundry or cleaning a separate household, are also essential. To what extent are carers aware of the tasks they will face? Carers' wellbeing is affected by their ability to handle the care situation. We therefore need to analyse how they manage the organisation in the initial transition phase and afterwards, as well as where they can obtain assistance.

Children's views and expectations

A first general question concerns the impact of different care arrangements on children. How do they feel about familial providers like parents, grandparents and other family members? Who do they prefer to spend their time with? More research on the role of networks and members of the extended family can map structures to support children and further illustrate children's acceptance of care providers that stand somewhere between major familial actors and institutionalised providers. To analyse this, we should examine how far children at different ages understand that certain care arrangements have to be made, and whether they even realise that they have to be taken care of. For children from different family backgrounds, it is not known how they rate their family situation and the corresponding care arrangements.

Evaluating how children would like to spend their days and who they would like to have as companions may be difficult in a methodological sense. Children might not imagine possibilities other than the ones they know and may therefore only respond within the set frame of their own experiences. New methodological approaches need to be developed in order to measure what is of interest.

Since there are various childcare models and differing ideas about childcare responsibilities within European societies, we might ask whether it is best for a child to be raised only or prominently by the parents – or as actually happens, by the mother. Children who spend more time in professional care facilities may experience their parents differently to those who are raised solely at home. This may be due to their perception or to actual differences in parenting behaviour. To achieve children's wellbeing, their experience of formal care outside the family should be analysed. This analysis would enable us to grasp their perception of the advantages and disadvantages of home and formal care. Other important questions are how relationships with parents change according to the care situation and how children feel about paternal involvement. Do children wish for their fathers to play a different (more active) role?

Any chosen care arrangement may affect the basic education of a child. The parents' education, however, strongly influences their choice of childcare arrangements. Education should be investigated in greater detail for both. For a successful outcome of studies on childcare, educational issues need to be considered. Analysis of children's points of view might tell us if the needs of children, as determined by educational science, are met in different forms of upbringing and how they perceive (potential) qualitative differences between parental and formal care. Differences between the member states on these issues should also be considered. It is not known, for example,

whether children voice different (educational) needs or wishes in the various member states, and if so, how such differences can be explained. Do children discriminate between supervision by personnel in day-care and parental education? Do children need more leeway or more boundaries, in particular concerning modern family structures and external influences (labour market, individualisation, etc.)? From the parents' point of view, examination of the potential of day-care facilities for providing basic education for children at different ages in the various member states could be compared. To what extent do parents actually want institutions to take over parental tasks?

When focussing on children as recipients of care, the different stages of a child's life should be considered above all. The same questions may be of changing importance depending on a child's age, and different solutions might be appropriate depending on the child's development. Research is needed to understand how needs and demands change during a child's life-course and how organisational structures can adapt to these developments. Families need assistance as children become increasingly independent and the care situation changes until the children leave their family of origin. How can appropriate support be designed?

The elderly

When it comes to care for elderly people, their right to lead a self-determined life must be considered above all. Difficulties are likely to arise when it comes to actual solutions to care demands on the side of the care providers. In order to assess future demands, it is necessary to know what kind of care the elderly want – or what kind of care they prefer if there were a choice. Hence, it has to be asked where they want to live, which care-giver they prefer (familial or professional, also taking aspects of sex, religion and ethnicity, etc. into account) or how they want to spend the rest of their lives. Additional aspects to be analysed are how the elderly cope with disabilities and reduced mobility and how important it is for them to be able to get assistance with dying/to get palliative care if they wish to.

Instead of trying to find general solutions for the care of the elderly, it is necessary to consider specific needs and abilities at different stages in later life. Care demands change over time, so that both the duration and the development of the care recipient's condition must be considered. The focus should also be on residual abilities and how people can be assisted to remain as independent for as long as possible. Starting at a time when people are still fully able to handle their own affairs, they may already want to prepare for the time when they might need help. Information on welfare services and the additional costs of private services will help individuals to plan for their future.

It is important to evaluate which agents could provide such information in the different member states in order to have reliable sources of information. Besides, it is necessary to find out to what extent the elderly try to obtain information and make plans of their own beforehand. How can they be assisted? When asking people about their desired care arrangements, it is possible to analyse the preferred role of their family and their needs and wishes considering ageing as a process. An important question here is how a person feels about having to ask care professionals (strangers) to help with everyday activities, in particular personal hygiene.

Old age may not only bring reduced abilities. Many people experience illness, pain and isolation. Their special needs and the possible ways of assisting those who suffer from disease and pain should be analysed in order to enhance their wellbeing. How can the emotional needs of people suffering from dementia, for example, still be addressed in order to prevent their care from becoming too much focussed on the bare necessities?

Palliative care is another major topic that needs to be addressed. The dissemination to elderly people of knowledge of the measures which will provide the best possible relief for their situation has to be

evaluated in different member states. An additional question is to what extent they rely on over-the-counter or self-prescribed drugs, alcohol, etc. to cope with everyday life or maybe even to relieve pain. A related aspect here is whether elderly people suffering from pain have regular access to medical services, and how well they are attended by their general practitioners in the various European countries.

Persons in (temporary) ill health

Among the care recipients who are possibly less visible are people who suffer from chronic disease or spells of ill health. These people need be neither elderly nor disabled. Their need for assistance usually comes unexpectedly and is coupled with further insecurities – for example, how long will it take them to recover?

Recovery from a heart attack or the treatment of cancer, for example, may interrupt an ordered life for a limited period of time. Care situations like these are characterised not only by different time horizons for care needs, but also by the possible or likely recovery of the patient. Chronic diseases or long-term bouts of cancer, on the other hand, may be well characterised by the same needs as those of elderly or disabled persons. The care needs of children may also differ greatly from those of adults, which leads to another necessary differentiation. For all groups of ill people, an examination of how they feel about professional care compared with familial care is necessary to find the best solutions. What are the wishes of people suffering from serious health conditions or fatal diseases when they have to deal with their situation, their family's involvement in their own care, the way their own family copes with their condition? For each type of illness we have to consider how best to assist patients with their treatment and their emotional wellbeing. Additionally, the families of seriously ill persons need assistance, as they may lose a family member. How can this help be best organised?

Persons with disabilities

When focussing on the demands of people with disabilities, there are some similarities to the needs of other groups of care recipients. The most pronounced difference, however, is that these care relations are characterised by their long-term orientation. The question of who is the desired carer arises to the same extent as what the 'best' care arrangement may be in any given case. Other circumstances have to be considered, however, as life-courses differ greatly. To what extent are people with disabilities encouraged to live as independently as they can? Furthermore, to what extent can they make use of their abilities, and are they able to realise their personal goals in the different EU27 countries? It is often assumed that disabled family members are a burden for their family, but they could also contribute to its wellbeing. How can they do this? What is wellbeing for persons with disabilities?

3.3.4 The impact of gender on care

With regard to care-givers' wellbeing, gender is a variable that needs to be considered in particular. This is because women are more involved in family work and because female employment has increased (Kuronen, *et al.,* 2010b). Thus, women experience greater burdens and more obligations.

This strong gender bias in care is true for all types of care activities. The fact that women perform most of the care tasks is attributable to persisting gender roles. However, since women have invested more in their education and want to use their resources in the labour market, the opportunity costs of family care have risen sharply. Apart from the empirical truth that women carry

out most of the family-related care tasks (e.g. Backes *et al.,* 2008; Access Economics, 2010), the underlying mechanisms for the under-representation of men should be investigated. In terms of an egalitarian approach – especially when the individualisation of lives and life-courses is more and more evident, with new forms of living including alternative family models – the apparent fact that sex or gender determines family involvement may be questioned. In order to look into this aspect of gender inequality in more detail, the reasons for taking responsibility in different care situations should be analysed in a comparative perspective, with particular emphasis on women's ability to negotiate their involvement in care and their preferred care situation. The way women feel about their care obligations and how they perceive appreciation for their commitment should also be analysed. These aspects could be mediated by support from other family members, the welfare state etc. What are the effects of different welfare regimes? Another way of looking at this topic would be to focus on the reasons and mechanisms that keep men from getting involved, and above all evaluate their desired involvement. Such a project may well lead to the conclusion that some men do not want to get involved in the family. Subsequent questions are concerned with country-specific attitudes towards gender and family tasks. Other possible reasons for men not getting involved in family care might be their employment opportunities or obligations, which are once again usually based on gendered and heteronormative social concepts. To analyse their true reasons, men should be asked about their wish to be involved in familial care and the obstacles they face in realising their ideals (including the possible reluctance of their spouses). In this analysis, it is important to differentiate between intentions and actual involvement, as well as to compare ideas in the various EU member states. What kind of support do men want and need in order to achieve their desired care involvement or the involvement they consider appropriate? Again, this needs to be differentiated according to the different types of care receivers.

The overall influence of gender roles, which may differ between countries, is a major explanatory variable when it comes to investigating familial work participation. Common gender roles in different countries are therefore an issue of major importance. One other important aspect, apart from the obvious reconciliation problem, is how women can manage employment, childrearing and care, and still find time for their own personal development and rest. However, the general question should be whether care-givers are able to balance their obligations. Hence, it is important to ask questions regarding support for carers, for example, and care leave schemes. This question also needs to be answered for carers who are not employed, or have opted out of employment in order to provide care. Gender is also relevant when focusing on care recipients. Potential questions here are how male and female care recipients assess gender imbalances in the provision of care. This can be differentiated according to different types of care (childcare, care for the elderly and disabled, etc. but also familial and professional care) and the different member states. These analyses could lead to an examination of the underlying mechanisms on which the imbalance is based.

Gender imbalance becomes critical for women once they reach old age. The majority of care-recipients are women (Backes *et al.,* 2008). After being first choice for the provision of care for their partners, they are likely to end up alone, since women have a longer life expectancy than men. This may produce considerable emotional stress for the individual, due to the uncertainty of who might take care of the female care-provider. Additionally, their pensions are reduced if they took time off for care instead of earning. This makes elderly women a subgroup requiring particular attention due to their potential lack of relatives who might provide assistance.

Caring in Europe

This section of the research agenda has shown that care is a multi-faceted topic that has multiple connections to family wellbeing. In order to find suitable answers to the various questions raised, the

priority is to obtain comparative data from all EU member states. Care was the topic that was considered most important at the FAMILYPLATFORM meetings. It is undoubtedly of major importance for the future of Europe and its families.

3.4   Life-course and transitions

Family life changes over the life-course. Needs and interests are therefore not stable but shifting. Although the life-course approach (Mayer, 1987; Elder, 1978) has become more important in the social sciences, there is a lack of research making use of this approach. In the EU we find comparative data mostly at the individual or household level (e.g. EUROSTAT, Eurobarometer, EU-SILC, SHARE, GGS).

Age governs entry into and exit from various life worlds – for example when it is appropriate to marry, have children, or enter or leave the world of work. Life-courses have become a challenge for each individual, which means that individuals have to take increasing responsibility for decisions and their consequences. However, there are still strong regularities, generalities, and traditions. Some basic patterns of family life in Europe have remained intact. At the same time, there is an increasing lack of suitable new role models. For example, the transition to parenthood occurs relatively late in all European states today – partly on account of the high demands that have to be met before it is possible to start a family. Here achieving the full status of adulthood (employment, material independence) plays an important role. The length of time young people remain in education, and high levels of youth unemployment, make this difficult to achieve in many contexts.

The societal challenge is to provide adequate support for different living conditions of families, bearing in mind increasing rates of change in the individual life-course, and to make individual life-courses compatible with intimate relationships and family development. Research into family wellbeing has to follow the life-course and focus on transitions. When individual episodes are taken into account, the need for further research into each stage becomes apparent. That said, the transition to adulthood will not be covered in the following sections, because data on this has already been provided by the Up2Youth research network (see Leccardi & Perego, 2010a). The central research themes for the remaining important transitions will be discussed along the lines of the family life-course, beginning with the transition to parenthood. The wellbeing of children and family from the point of view of children, the family's material situation, insecurity, inequality and gender and education should be borne in mind as cross-sectional themes.

3.4.1   Transition to parenthood

Some data on the transition to parenthood is available across Europe, for example information on the age of the firstborn child, the desire for children and attitudes to childcare and employment. There are also analyses of the influence of the social security systems on the structuring of the transition, for example the length of the breaks mothers and fathers take from the workplace. Having said this, questions of fertility are not only influenced by family policy measures, but far more by norms and attitudes. Models and ideals of parenthood also play a role. This means that the interplay between the development of such patterns and policy measures must be taken into account. Little is known about these complex interrelationships (Philipov et al., 2009; Gauthier, 2007). There is a lack of longitudinal studies on (potentially) relevant factors and observations on trends and changes here (Badinter, 2010; Stauber, 2010). Thus it is currently supposed that a reorientation to more traditional forms is taking place, particularly in countries with a large number of mothers in employment and

widespread acceptance of early institutionalised childcare (e.g. France and Sweden). As a result, there are increasing calls for mothers to care for their children for longer and give up their jobs. A contrary development can be observed in Germany, for example, as mothers shorten their maternity leave here, and extra-familial childcare is taken up earlier and on a wider scale. A scientific investigation of this process is necessary, on the one hand, in order to work out the influence of national social policies and attitudinal trends and their interplay with regard to the development of fertility; and, on the other hand, in order to compare the various measures in Europe. To achieve this, survey data relating to the target groups is needed, ideally for all European states. How do attitudes to the roles of parents and ideas of what constitutes good care differ and change? Is there a Europe-wide approach? And what factors govern such processes (e.g. the effects of cohorts, changes in the social and political conditions, the influence of the media, scientific data, ethnic backgrounds)? In addition, it is also necessary to have national experts write reports that record and observe current social and political regulations.

In existing research, low birth rates are usually associated with later age at parenthood, and this goes back in concrete terms to the postponement of the decision to have children. A few studies underline this and show that this is less a matter of a generally negative attitude to starting a family and more a question of the correct timeframe, which often leads to childlessness or a lower than desired number of children. An up to date confirmation and evaluation of these studies is essential if measures are to be taken to encourage people to start a family and obstacles are to be removed. Then again, differences between the countries must take into account differing cultural and socio-political backgrounds (Blum & Rille-Pfeiffer, 2010a). In order to carry out such research properly, a longitudinal design involving both partners would be ideal. It might, however, be easier to ask representative couples who are at the end of their fertile phase the following questions about their decision-making process: What is the most important factor in deciding when to have a child? What obstacles do they see to having a child? And what forms of support do they need? Of course, such an approach involves the risk of rationalisation and reinterpretation of decisions and events. It would be helpful to examine the exceptions to the rule more closely (e.g. teenage parenthood, families with many children). This would provide insight into coping strategies. What reasons and motives shape these transitions? Which anticipated support services – whether private or public – play a role? What life-course models lie behind the decision, particularly which conceptions of employment or women's careers? What impact do gender-specific expectations of the roles of mothers and fathers have, and how are they compatible with the perception of the partner in this context? An important question when starting a family is also the decision on the legal relationship between the parents, and between the parents and the child. This is significant because these legal definitions determine disadvantage and affect the extent to which the child and the parent-child relationship are subject to insecurity later on. Are such aspects consciously weighed up? Or are they rather unintended consequences of other decisions or the results of a lack of alternatives? Are there plans to mitigate any possible disadvantages?

There are many complex decisions surrounding the transition to parenthood. How the decision-making processes take place – to what extent they are rational and therefore more open to influence as normative concepts and how the partners negotiate their ideas – is an important aspect which should be analysed further through qualitative studies. In order to avoid overlaps, the consequences of the transition to parenthood on the structuring of everyday life and the division of labour within the household will be discussed in Chapter 3.4.

3.4.2 Dissolution, separation, divorce and reorganisation

The decrease in the stability of relationships is a major factor affecting family dynamics and the multiplicity of family forms (Leccardi & Perego, 2010a; Beier *et al.,* 2010). FAMILYPLATFORM therefore demanded an in-depth study into the field of separation and divorce that goes beyond the existing basic data (Wall *et al.,* 2010c).

With regard to causal research, the following should be borne in mind. What factors lie at the heart of the failure of the partnership and what role do the children play in this context? How do the sexes differ in their (unfulfilled) expectations, reasons and decision-making processes? How encumbered with conflicts is the decision-making process and what differences emerge according to family form and the socio-demographic profiles of the partners? What differences are there in cultural and ethnic backgrounds? What roles do stress and the demands of the workplace play, and how can these be dealt with constructively?

Another suggestion for obtaining more information on the possibilities in the context of intervention studies would be to discern how families can be stabilised in the run-up to dissolution. Here it should once again be noted that the development and status of family education and empowerment in Europe varies widely. Hence, there is a significant need for research and co-ordination on 'easily-obtainable and tailor-made support for families'. In this respect individual countries could benefit from the experience of others and fit existing concepts to their needs and social systems.

The wellbeing of children is a relevant but wholly ambivalent point in the decision of parents to get divorced. It is known that children need stability and would normally like to live with both parents as a rule, and furthermore they suffer more or less strongly and long-term as a result of divorce. In addition, as smaller-scale studies show, children are troubled by continuous conflict within the family. It is therefore necessary to ask how these situations can be resolved, especially since they may have far-reaching consequences. How can the wellbeing of the children be ensured? What concrete and practical support do families need and accept in this context? How far do the social surroundings of the family help, and how does pressure from intergenerational relationships affect the family?

Separation and divorce have a number of consequences. With regard to child custody, there is a need to establish which solutions have proven to be helpful for the development of the children (e.g. national law, competence and resources of the parents). Thus, for example, when and for which families joint custody is a good solution and when is it not. Once again, it is important to consider the decision from the child's point of view. What are children's wishes and ideas, depending on age and sex? How do they experience the separation process? To whom do children turn with their fears and questions in this situation, and what forms of support would they prefer? What is the meaning of intergenerational relationships for support purposes?

It should also be discussed from what age and in what way children can be involved in decision-making processes and what their status should be. In which phase of development and under what concrete conditions are children in a position to contribute constructively? When can one tell that they are facing too many demands? How much leeway is good for different family constellations, and when are clear rules necessary as a framework (e.g. fixed time restrictions on contacts with others, delegation of responsibilities)?

The material situation of post-divorce families is also a relevant issue. This is to a large degree gender-dependent, and it should be borne in mind that the children usually stay with the mother. A diversity of regulations distinguishes alimony law at the European level, which suggests that it would be reasonable to undertake a comparison of the consequences. A longitudinal study of the situation

of post-divorce families (in particular single-parent families) might provide more information on the threat of material deprivation and its duration, as well as on families' compensation strategies. Such a survey might furthermore show how the situation of children changes and how they cope with this change. It is also of interest to know whether there are differences – based on national legal positions – between divorced couples and separated partnerships, not only in material terms but also in terms of the whole process. Does the formal legal framework serve to mitigate conflicts because it provides clearly defined rules, or does it rather exacerbate the individual solutions?

In this way, interdisciplinary approaches could provide information on the coping strategies of parents and children, and not only with respect to material deprivation. Examples of this would be coping with lost relationships (e.g. through broken contacts or a move) and the emotional and social support related to this as well as conflicts of loyalty.

An important question here concerns change in intergenerational relationships. Do contacts with both sets of grandparents or the extended family remain? How do the expectations and performance of support develop? What are the consequences of this for the parental decision-making process? And what effects does this have on the children's chances (support, participation)? In this case, accompanying research would also be very meaningful as it is to be expected that the appropriate changes – for example the withdrawal of material and non-material investments in the 'separated' family relationship – would drop off gradually rather than acutely.

The proportion of re-marriage has grown significantly in the whole of Europe – though varying markedly according to region. Re-marriage or the setting up of a partnership not based on marriage affects not only the partners themselves but also the family system as a whole, in particular the children. It is important to take the children's point of view into account in this context. How do they experience this process? How much influence do they have over its structure? Is it true that parents value the relationship with their children more than the relationship with their new partner? How do children deal with any conflicts of loyalty that may arise? In order to answer these questions, a longitudinal study on single parents could be expanded to include the transition to step or patchwork families. In this way the process of setting up and structuring these family forms would be incorporated.

3.4.3   Variety of family forms

A variety of family forms has come into being not only as a result of the aforementioned process, but also based on increased tolerance and freedom of choice (in most EU states) (Beier *et al.,* 2010; Wall *et al.,* 2010c). This gives rise to the expression 'the pluralism of family relationships'. Single parents are numerically the most significant group after families involving couples. As previously mentioned, it is for this reason that their situation should be of particular interest. It is a major challenge for these families to balance work outside the home, which is often indispensable on material grounds, with tasks within it. These aspects should be studied in depth. To what extent is it possible for parents to have enough time for childcare as well as for their own regeneration? Which areas are particularly difficult for single parents – the care of infants or pubescent children, as well as eventually embarking on a new partnership? Alongside existing care institutions and specific forms of support available for this family form, questions arise in connection with private support networks, which may be able to defuse the family situation dramatically. Intergenerational solidarity is to be seen in this way, but also new networks such as self-help groups offer support and should be incorporated, on the basis of their importance. It is of interest here how the affected person is able to tap such resources and which form of support is most needed. Other research questions regarding post-divorce or post-separation situations have already been dealt with. Alongside these, two further

groups of single parents can be identified: those who have started a family without a partner and single parents who have been widowed. Both of these groups are numerically of little relevance. However, it would be worth making an appropriate differentiation within the analyses with a view to understanding variations in patterns of coping.

The spread of unmarried cohabiting couples with children varies markedly between European countries (Beier *et al.,* 2010), whereby the numbers correlate closely with the legal position. Research should look into this family form, where disadvantages as a result of the legal situation are to be expected. Moreover, it should examine and compare the consequences on the wellbeing of the children.

Step and patchwork families are very complex entities and, with their specific structural demands, stand out against the background of a lack of common family history (*ibid.*). We know little about how they deal with this situation and to what extent it is possible not only to establish a family identity but also to involve the family in an extended family network. Specific research in this field could explain the developments all family members go through and what forms of support they need. Of great importance here are the legal forms involved, particularly between parents and their stepchildren, because this has lasting consequences for the security of the children.

Other family forms are increasingly part of the scientific debate, for example adoptive and foster families, families of same-sex partners, and other minorities. It would be necessary, first of all, to set out their numerical and proportional significance on an EU-wide basis so that official statistics are appropriately differentiated and comparably structured. This should be done for every child in the family, so that they show whether children are natural or social children and what their legal position is *vis-à-vis* their stepparents. Within the framework of the FAMILYPLATFORM, there was a perceived need for greater insight into the situation of rare family forms as well as those from ethnic minorities. Europe-wide, this could be put into practice by means of oversampling in the context of Eurobarometer research. At the national level, this could be achieved by means of smaller specific studies devoted to questions such as the following: What is the situation with regard to social acceptance? What are the educational and occupational opportunities available? Under what material conditions do they grow up? What are the consequences of having a particular legal status?

3.4.4   Family phases

The demands placed on the family change with the age of the children. That means that the tasks as well as the necessary resources of the parents alter too (Van Dongen, 2009). Until now, research and most family policy measures have devoted insufficient attention to issues such as how and when transitions, like the start of institutionalised childcare, starting school, changing school, training or starting work, bring about reorganisation of the entire familial system. This is true for the roles of parents and the distribution of labour within the family, as well as between family and professional employment. For example, the scope for employment of mothers increases in general with the age of the children (OECD, 2010b; Pettit & Hock, 2009). This means that it is ever more difficult to deal with the need for support which occurs later on in life – for example with regard to problems at school. A specific study to deal with these transitions could contribute to providing institutions and familial measures with the necessary information, thereby making family life easier and more attractive. In this context, such a study should ask what the perceived needs of the parents are with regard to the possibilities for taking leave and organising their work time, as well as how willing or reluctant they are to take advantage of these opportunities. What degree of flexibility do parents need during these periods of transition? What experience is there for leeway on the side of the employer and what can be done to level the gender-specific differences of this and to allay

prejudice? Here too, national policies should be viewed as a background variable in order to work out best-practice models.

In this context, sources of instability in the varying phases of family also need to be analysed and taken into account. Which transitions are particularly troublesome for parents? Where do they have the greatest need for information and support? Which transitions and phases do they experience as being most stressful and how do they cope with these? Generally, it is necessary to gather the opinion of all members of the family, as experts in their own situation, and consider them in a differentiated way: their wishes for family policy measures and support, as well as their ideas of a family-friendly society.

3.4.5   Transition to large families

Although demographic development is essentially associated with a reduction in 'large' families (Beier *et al.,* 2010), research has focussed little on this question. The Eurobarometer for 2006 shows that the ideal number of children per family lies above the value of two. The value of three children is only achieved in Ireland and Cyprus. There is a gap between the ideal and the actual number of children. Hence, as a rule, there are fewer children born than desired. In this context, questions arise as to what extent actual experience with the first child (or children) acts as a deterrent to further births, and how support systems can influence this. The example of France is pertinent here, where specific promotional measures beyond the third child have had a beneficial effect on fertility. The point here is to examine what mechanisms, considerations and attitudes play a role in the decision to start a large family (Eggen & Rupp, 2006). It should be borne in mind that there are varying concepts of gender roles, motherhood and fatherhood. Research is needed to analyse the influence these concepts have on decisions relating to fertility.

What impact does the decision have on employment hours, the division of work and the financial situation of families?

In everyday family life, the financial situation is an important aspect, because large families seem to be found in greater numbers in both the lower and upper income classes. Furthermore, there are marked differences according to ethnic and cultural backgrounds. In families with limited financial resources, there is the problem of ensuring sufficient resources for the children so that they have the same opportunities in life as others. A further enthralling question is how young people experience growing up in a large family and what the consequences are for their own ideas of family. Furthermore, the acceptance of large families in European societies could be assessed within the framework of the Eurobarometer. It would be possible, in this way, to gather key information on whether and how the image of these families could be improved. In comparative studies between large and small families, it could be shown how important different expectations are, for example with regard to employment and levels of care, as well as varying attitudes to parental roles and responsibility. Furthermore, it could be shown how far families of varying social status differ.

3.4.6   Families, relationships of the elderly and the transition to the fourth age

Along with longer life expectancy, establishing and structuring relationships has become significantly more important for the older generations. However there are fewer normative points of reference and behavioural patterns available than for earlier phases in life (e.g. living together or marriage). These consequences affect not only the couple but also – as in stepfamilies – the whole family system. Alongside the question as to how the elderly find partners and establish new relationships, it

is also important to understand how intergenerational relationships develop. What are the consequences of a new relationship in terms of mutual exchange and support? The Gender and Generation Survey provides good information here. However it has not (so far) taken these dynamics into account. Important questions therefore arise in connection with exchanges between the generations. What relationships are prioritised? Does this possibly lead to breakdowns in intergenerational relationships? And, on the other hand, how does the new relationship help to unburden the younger generation – for example in emotional terms in connection with care and other forms of support? This is important information if we consider demographic developments on the one hand and the burden on the social system on the other hand. It could also be significant for the structuring of the so-called fourth age.

Elderly people have valuable resources: skills and qualifications, and a rather high amount of free time. They could be used to implement a 'skills market' for people in retirement. Local offices could offer paid or unpaid voluntary social work. This could help to establish networks and provide support to families within the community, but also (re)integrate the elderly and fulfil their need for recognition (Kapella *et al.*, 2011).

With regard to the phase of being the oldest old, this amplifies the question as to the needs of elderly people – particularly for care – and the resources available. The SHARE data shows that children are fundamentally prepared to step in for their parents (Schmidt *et al.,* 2009). Questions arise however as to whether and to what extent they are able to do so. Some of the children will find themselves at an age when they are still very active and perhaps even in employment. They will, therefore, be short of time for providing more care for the elderly. Other children will not be fully able to provide extensive care themselves. Despite the high degree of solidarity between the generations, new concepts and models of care and nursing may be needed. This is also true given the increase of severe illness amongst the elderly (e.g. dementia), where professional help in the form of advice or concrete support is needed. Such models could be conceived of and tested within the framework of practically oriented research projects in which research and practice co-operate creatively. The objective should be to develop new forms of collaboration between families and institutions. Such research should directly seek out and combine the points of view of both parents and children together with the knowledge and experience of innovative projects.

3.5 Doing family

With regard to the social trends in modern societies shown above, it has become a major task and creative challenge to manage daily life within the family. Doing family aims not only at gender equality, but also at a higher quota of women in employment – and last but not least the social security of mothers and fathers. What policy measures are appropriate for providing support to parents in this area?

Doing family means matching different demands from different parts of society. The increase in the numbers of women in the labour market is a general trend throughout Europe, although at differing levels and driven by different motivations. The striking variations in the number and scope of participation of mothers in the workplace in Europe depend not only on the structure of the labour market but also on norms and attitudes – in particular with regard to gender roles. On the whole, a decline in the male breadwinner model may be observed. At the same time, there is an increase in the time that both partners (taken together) spend at work. This raises the question of how these trends affect other areas of life, particularly the family. Moreover, what measures need to be taken to create the best conditions possible for the children's development and the wellbeing of the whole family?

With regard to the institutional conditions and opportunities for childcare, there are more possibilities and support for the family; however, there are complaints about the shortness and inflexibility of holidays. In addition, the solutions provided by care institutions are often not in line with parents' employment obligations. For example, in some countries, the opening times of care institutions do not cover the scope or the flexibility of work requirements. In addition, there are major differences in the structure and form of the services the care institutions offer – depending on whether they are provided by state institutions, independent organisations and/or private agencies. If we take leisure activities, educational pursuits (e.g. music lessons) and further social duties (e.g. looking after elderly family members) into consideration, it becomes clear that family members are involved in very different tasks, and that they also follow different routines which are not easily harmonised. As a rule, women are responsible for the management of these structures, principally because they are in charge of household and care tasks to a great extent (Blaskó & Herche, 2010a).

Corresponding to the diversity of care structures and cultures in Europe, parents (i.e. for the most part, mothers) find it more or less difficult to combine family and care duties with their own participation in the workplace. The result is that, despite multiple tendencies towards modernisation in women's education and participation in the labour market over the past few decades, remarkably little has changed: women are still responsible for the lion's share of unpaid work – in concrete terms, they are responsible for around 80 per cent of household chores and around two thirds of the childcare. Although there has been a slight increase in male participation, household chores and childcare remain the responsibility of women (*ibid.*). These, as well as other factors, can lead to dissatisfaction, overload, conflict and frustration.

According to research carried out to date, this depends essentially on normative models and the concepts of gender of the partners within the context of a cultural or social framework. If polarised gender roles are deeply anchored in a socio-cultural structure, then new, egalitarian forms of task arrangements could have a hard time establishing themselves. A woman being forced to take on the role of provider – perhaps due to a man's unemployment – could, for example, have negative consequences on both sides: men who do not see themselves as being in a position to fulfil their assigned roles are frustrated and little motivated to take on the female part. Women tend to compensate for this by not striving for relief from household duties. This leads to a double burden on the people involved and to dissatisfaction on both sides. With the concept of an egalitarian work arrangement in mind, different ideas or the need for increasing negotiation over actual practical arrangements could lead to stress and conflict. Both examples show that a satisfying division of labour in the family is of utmost importance for the wellbeing of all. This is vital for the personal gender identity of the partners (Bielby & Bielby, 1989), but also because it makes for reduced levels of stress and conflict. Both factors are important conditions for the stability of partnerships and therefore, both directly and indirectly, for the growth and development of the children.

One starting point – alongside the reorganisation of the social security system – is that the labour market has changed dramatically in the wake of globalisation: on the one hand, the increasing flexibility of working timetables and models of employment create possibilities for family members to organise their lives individually. On the other hand, however, it often leads to pressure, the obligation to conform, a high expectation of availability and increased insecurity for the (potential) employee. The question therefore is how to arrange lives flexibly so as to match individual needs.

Based on the trends laid out above and the still evident gender gap (which operates to the disadvantage of women), the European objective of gender equality is still a very long way off (European Commission, 2009b). Progress has been made in terms of female participation in the workplace, albeit with significant variations between the European nations. Further progress is to a great extent contingent on changes in the division of labour and the expansion of a family-friendly

care network. Against this background, doing family is still an extremely important area of research because current information as well as knowledge of the main influencing factors is urgently needed if the aims of Europe 2020 are to be taken seriously.

There is thus a continuing need for research, especially in the area of unpaid work in the household and the upbringing and care of children. In the following section, the general need will be discussed first before moving on to selected topics of relevance for the future.

3.5.1 General need for research in the field of doing family

The status of previous research in this area is very heterogeneous: the participation of men and women, fathers and mothers in the labour market is relatively well documented and up to date (e.g. Eurostat, 2009; European Commission, 2011). There is, however, a significant lack of research on the division of labour within the family (Blasko & Herche, 2010b). Firstly, available data is not up to date at the EU level, which is especially critical given developments in the labour market. Secondly, there is no comparable information for all of the member countries of EU27. Thirdly, comparability is made more difficult due to the implementation of different approaches to and concepts of measuring unpaid work, household labour and childcare. Fourthly, little data has been obtained using the more labour-intensive diary method (Bonke, 2005): on the whole, the available information is based on estimates of time spent, which is seen as less valid than the diary method in current discussions on methodology (see 3.1; Schulz & Grunow, 2007). Work is often also carried out using task participation indices or information on responsibility. This makes it difficult to produce differentiated results. Furthermore, differentiation by age and number of the children and the family form is either not possible or not used under these methods.

As we pointed out in the introductory passages, there is a lack of reliable and comparable information at the EU level. That means first of all that research on the division of labour in the family is needed in a more differentiated form. New data can be set as a solid base against the existing information on participation in the workplace. Different task areas are to be identified and defined empirically.

- Paid work including overtime and additional time – in particular, the time involved in commuting to work, training, participating in special events, etc. – must be differentiated and recorded precisely. In order to be able to assess compatibility with other duties (or lack of it), it is also necessary to clarify how time is allocated during the day (Schulz & Grunow, 2007) as well as the changes and uncertainties this involves.

- There already are various differentiated research models for tasks within the household. It is, however, necessary to investigate on a significantly broader base what method of measurement is appropriate. It would be of great scientific and practical value to carry out a specialised examination into the strength of the various concepts applied in the collection of data on the division of labour and investment of time within the family. Here, there are concrete records (diary method) alongside estimates of time units and task participation. In part, we come across the additional disadvantage that the tasks are categorised differently. Therefore, there is an urgent need for unity in order to achieve comparability. It is also vital to clarify the actual strengths and weaknesses of the different concepts, for example:

  - whether a higher response rate is gained using the concept of time estimates, because this form inquiry takes less time and effort;

  - whether this possible advantage justifies obtaining less precise data?

- The investment of time in childcare is not widely recorded either and is therefore difficult to compare across countries. Here too a pattern is to be developed that differentiates between the different tasks depending on the age and needs of the children. A categorisation to this end still has to be worked out, because few differentiated methods of measurement have been used so far. Since the dimensions and categories depend heavily on the age of the children, this factor should be taken into account when developing the instruments. Taking more children into account is a creative challenge for research.

- It is also to be noted that household tasks and childcare are often carried out at the same time. This situation must be borne in mind in order to record possible signs of overloading on the one hand, and to identify gender-related differences on the other. It is also important to consider the number of children that are being cared for simultaneously, and what their age differences are. In this area it is necessary to use a sensitive approach to recording the differences in the potential demands and stresses on parents.

- In order to be able to deal with the previous questions properly, it is necessary to capture the subjective experience of overload and stress in a differentiated way. Further methodological development is of vital importance as well making this an interdisciplinary task.

Corresponding basic data should be collected in all European countries and standardised as far as possible. Ideally, this should be carried out on a regular basis. In-depth and explorative studies that differentiate according to socio-cultural and socio-economic background as well as for different selected regions (e.g. strongly traditional or modern-egalitarian areas) should be made available.

The question as to how unpaid work in general can be differentiated sufficiently poses a further enormous challenge. A scientific method to this end constitutes the prerequisite for a better appreciation of the importance of these tasks. Only with this knowledge can the missing appreciation be worked on. So far, it has been supposed that household and care activities, for example, are unattractive because they are 'invisible', unpaid, never-ending and for the most part without any recognisable 'output'. A change in the perceived value would therefore be a condition for a true freedom of choice between occupation and family. It could also play a part in changing the overall gender inequality – although this does require a longer restructuring of thought processes. It is, therefore, a challenge for future research to measure and evaluate unpaid work. Policies are required to turn these evaluations into concrete measures ranging from the public sphere to appropriate regulations.

This brings us to the question of how social security systems, as they are presently constituted, influence gender roles and the division of labour. With regard to the relatively large socio-political differences in Europe and the rather smaller differences in the division of labour, there is a need for further research into related aspects. This is particularly true for societal inducements for and the speed of development of change. The processes of political and social change should be understood as an interactive development. The observation and evaluation of socio-political trends is both a general and central task for future research (see 3.2).

These considerations lead to the question of whether and how far gender equality will develop in Europe in the future, and whether the trend is going in the direction of a more pronounced segregation of gender roles. It is still unclear whether European development will converge or diverge. A discussion is required on how gender equality is understood by different parties – politicians, stakeholders and family members. Employment rates and salary levels alone are not enough to achieve the required understanding. Both social conditions and family motivations (e.g. for a specific pattern of participation in the labour market) are too different. So what other indicators

are important here? In this context, it is necessary to ask about the wishes and preferences of the (expectant) parents. Here, the different socio-cultural and historical backgrounds have to be taken into account in order to achieve a differentiated picture. With regard to the demand of female participation in employment, it is necessary to ask, for example, what consequences this has in the area of care. What measures are required to ensure that families, and especially women, do not suffer from double or multiple loads? And how can knowledge and skills with regard to family-related tasks be safeguarded so that they remain generally accessible and do not become the province of experts?

So far, the data available with regard to comparing countries has shown that the increase in female participation in the workplace has led – at least in part – to a more egalitarian division of labour within the family. How can such trends be monitored in order to avoid overload? And how can similar processes be introduced in other countries? What are the main influencing factors and how can they be put into practice at the family policy level? Is change going in the direction of a more egalitarian participation in the labour market with innovative models to solve the division of labour within the family, and how can such social innovations be made known?

3.5.2   Reconciliation of work and family

The reconciliation of work and family is of immense importance for the wellbeing of family members. Since there are significant differences in the scale of support in this context within European countries (e.g. regulations on parental leave and opportunities for working part-time; OECD, 2010c; OECD, 2010d), it is not easy to make a general evaluation of the situation. However, based on current data, it is clear that mothers, in particular, interrupt or reduce their participation in the labour market in order to care for the family (see 3.3). How good that solution really is and what disadvantages it represents for them requires further research. The opportunities they have of using different means of family policy in the context of actual work situations are of equal importance. According to the latest studies (BMFSFJ, 2010), there are huge differences between the European nations. Corresponding data on support for families through work-related measures exists for six European countries only. Further research into employers' attitudes and concrete measures to support reconciliation is needed. Such data would have to be analysed in the context of the particular state regulations and compared with the concrete wishes and problems of the parents. Finally, there is no guarantee that well-meant solutions on the side of the employer are best for the family. They might lead to stress or loyalty issues (e.g. if contact with the company is kept up during parental leave or when part-time work is structured flexibly). Thus, the suitability of such models should be a particular goal. The objective here is to work out best-practice models for different social situations. Therefore it is essential to look into the question of the transferability of solutions to different social levels and the socio-political development of existing patterns.

3.5.3   Demands on the family – variations over the life cycle

Doing family is by no means limited to the balance of work and family. To a far greater extent, an internal division of labour has to follow. As has already been shown, this is mostly not on an equal footing. It is important to remember here that work within the family does not remain constant but changes with the passing of time (see 3.4). It is often forgotten that new challenges and structures arise when children get older and that it is not only the early years that make special demands. Against this background, the life-course perspective is also to be kept in mind during doing family

research. Since the life-course of the family forms its own area of research (see 3.4), certain phases and transitions will be examined in the following sections.

Changes in the division of labour during the transition to parenthood

In recent times, egalitarian structures of the division of labour have become established in many European countries. This is particularly true for childless couples. Not infrequently, starting a family leads to huge changes. Parental leave for a number of months has been established in most European countries. It is taken mainly by mothers in the time directly after birth. This leads to enormous changes in the entire family structure, and the division of labour is often transformed in a major way. While mothers look after the child and, at the same time, usually take over a larger portion of the household chores, fathers often increase their efforts in the workplace because they have greater financial responsibility now. As a result, the daily lives of the partners drift apart. This can lead to a situation in which mutual understanding and appreciation of the pressures decrease at the same time as the feelings of overload and dissatisfaction rise. There are many reasons for this: it is partly due to the fact that reality does not match the original plans and preconceptions, and partly to the overload which the (sometimes self-imposed) demands of parenthood bring about. Finally, it is not always easy to deal with the new role and relationship structure, particularly when the child's needs are paramount.

Today's young parents are not always prepared for the demands of such new situations. The transmission of family-related know-how is seldom systematic, and there are reduced opportunities for learning in the family of origin. In addition, experience in dealing with children is decreasing as a result of the lower number of children and the increase in the age of mothers at birth of the first child. Starting a family then introduces the parents to a completely new world, the mechanisms and structures of which they often do not comprehend sufficiently. Generally, grandparents are ready to provide support, but participation in the labour market and physical distance frequently limit their ability to do so. A lack of skills and resources therefore tends to make the management of the family more difficult today. We find ourselves in a tense situation made up of a flood of information on the one hand (e.g. advice books for parents), and a lack of everyday knowledge on the other hand. We do not know enough about how much knowledge parents need and how information and everyday skills can best be passed on to them.

There is, accordingly, a need for research on the relationship between gender concepts and parental roles (at both the individual and the cultural level), experience, expectations, support and the idea of the individual life-course. Although we can see different social structures with different forms of division of labour and therefore different degrees of egalitarianism between men and women, we know too little about actual decision-making processes and motives. There is also hardly any information about current ideas on the relationship between the genders at the individual, socio-cultural and societal level. This is also true for any eventual contradictions between normatively expected and individually preferred patterns. How do unemployed young fathers act, for example, in rather traditional societies or spheres when their partners take on the role of breadwinner? How does the division of labour proceed in such cases? Which role do age and peer group play? Are there any differences according to socio-political backgrounds? How do other people in the social environment, especially the extended family, react to such 'pioneers'?

This raises the question as to what socio-political paths could lead to greater equality at the European level. What are the concrete obstacles: norms, concepts of identity, economic realities or socio-political options? How can they be influenced? How can more tolerance be created to deal with those who 'deviate' from the mainstream? It is important to have analyses of the historical development of norms and social systems which show how concepts of equality and social

development are connected, and to assess what underlying forces drive them forward or hinder them. A Europe-wide comparative study on the concepts of the division of labour in the family is necessary in order to assess the degree to which societal options match family needs.

With regard to families' real situations, it is also necessary to research how far their resources and skill levels can be developed and how support and relief within the family can be delivered. To this end, it is also necessary to look into dependencies on individual socio-cultural backgrounds. Here it is not only a question of measures on family formation but also of alleviation in daily working life – whether through greater understanding and flexibility or through concrete offers of childcare, canteens, etc.

The consolidation of the division of labour in different stages of the life-course

According to our present knowledge, traditional patterns of the division of labour within the family become entrenched the longer they are practised. The sharing of tasks does not change significantly after mothers return to the labour market. They retain the main responsibility for family-related tasks. The resulting dissatisfaction and feeling of overload constitute risks for the wellbeing of all family members.

Furthermore, new challenges have to be taken into account: in some European countries (e.g. Germany), the opening times of schools are very limited and offer rather tight timeframes for childcare, especially for younger children. The opening times of these institutions are less comprehensive and flexible than those for pre-school children. In other countries (especially France and Sweden), institutions providing childcare and education are closely co-ordinated, transitions are fluid, and more flexible use is therefore possible. However, school holidays almost always exceed the paid leave of parents. The available outside support in this situation is extremely variable – not only between European countries but also between urban and rural or regional locations. This leads to different levels of coping within the family, for example with regard to starting school or within the education system. Achieving work-life balance – especially for mothers – becomes more difficult at the same time as the demands for support and encouragement of the children rise. A factor not to be neglected in this context is the increasing need for children to be picked up and dropped off. It has already been pointed out that corresponding duties need to be studied in a differentiated way. Comparative studies of countries and welfare systems are necessary here. They could help to clarify how families could be supported in this context so that both parents could achieve their individual aims and conflicts could be avoided. It is necessary to ask some concrete questions: under what conditions do parents find the transition to school (or other further educational institutions) less burdensome? Another question is: how do families differ within the same system, and how do they experience and deal with demands in different ways? Which resources play a role here? What attitudes, for example towards external childcare and the role of the family as opposed to care institutions and school, are most influential?

The relationship between family and educational institutions seems to be a central question that is worth studying. In this context, not only the opinion of the parents is important. This can be quite easily ascertained through surveys. Public opinion is equally important here: who is responsible for the development and educational success of the children, for example? In this context, it is necessary to examine the attitude of the 'system' of childcare and school with all its participants and structures. Which images do they convey? What demands do they make? And what means of support do they offer?

The division of labour in the post-parental phase and after the transition to retirement

Retirement comes with many new challenges that have a significant impact on the reorganisation of the division of labour within the family. As a rule, mothers were mainly responsible in this context. If the partner takes on more – and especially particular – chores, this can be perceived as a loss of competence by the woman. Perhaps a re-evaluation of labour within the family takes place. This is subdivided into more important or less attractive chores, and these are shared accordingly. In this context, it is possible that the man is given the role of handyman, but also that certain attractive chores are taken away from the woman. This leads to a reduction in the importance of her role. Both situations can lead to stress, conflict and dissatisfaction in the long term. In this context, it is also important to find out how contact with and support for children and grandchildren are managed. Which transfers take place here? And does one partner play a more important role in this than the other?

Given all these changes, it would be interesting to examine parents' decision-making processes. Is there a conscious decision-making process at all? And if so, how profound and conflicting is it? Which arguments are raised? Are there any differences related to the socio-economic background of different groups of parents? How do these decision-making patterns change over time? Which forms of rationalisation are introduced?

3.5.4 The role of the father in the family

The change in gender roles has mainly occurred with regard to the attitudes and ability of women to organise their own lives (Lück, 2009). In this context, questions arise about changes on the male side. In the end, a family-centred reorganisation of labour would be a potential solution to the work-life balance problem. However, men are generally seen as possessing "verbal openmindedness and rigid behaviour" (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995:20). The data briefly referred to above shows that men and fathers change only very slowly. Minimal changes have taken place in their professional and family lives. Differences can be detected, however, in line with the dominant and normative models supported by the social system (Blasko & Herche, 2010a). The participation of fathers is extremely important if greater gender equality is to be achieved. However, the fact that research on fathers is still in its early stages means that it urgently needs to be developed. This also means that there is a lack of representative comparative data on the scope and motivation of fathers' involvement in the family. In this area, research is faced with numerous challenges. Next to the Europe-wide collection of data on the attitudes, practices and perceived restrictions of fathers, it is above all necessary to take innovative models of work-life balance into account (e.g. support at the company or public sector level, but also in the form of socio-political conditions). The latest research results show that companies increasingly recognise the mutual benefits of a pro-family stance. However, there are pronounced national differences here (BMFSFJ, 2010). The inclusion of these findings in future research is an important aspect on the way to developing and supporting more practice-oriented models of work-life balance.

As a starting-point, we should ask what conclusions can be drawn from existing databases and what socio-cultural and socio-political influences can be observed. What do these things tell us about our opportunities to structure our lives in future? A further important question is which attitudes and experiences dominate in the different groups of people involved.

- What stops fathers becoming more involved in the family, both in terms of everyday life and their ability to take parental leave?

- Why do parents (in particular, fathers) so rarely take advantage of existing regulations on parental leave and part-time work?

- Differentiated according to socio-cultural background, how does the relationship between role definition and active fatherhood develop?

- Which role do images and the attitude of mothers play in the decision-making process? Are fathers denied access?

- What effects do real or anticipated skills have on childcare and household chores? How can perceived deficits be compensated for?

- With regard to the division of labour, what is the importance of perceived attitudes in the social environment for self-definition as man and father?

The differences in income of men and women as well as their dependence on the different tax systems are profoundly important.

3.5.5   Meaning of and change in the role of the mother

In order to be able to understand the implications of doing family, it is equally vital to deal with the idea of the role of the mother. Which role models prevail in Europe and in what direction are they heading? What are the influences of socio-cultural backgrounds and developments in the labour market? How do they stand in relation to the social security system and what tensions arise, for example, when these ideas come into conflict with mainstream ideas? How much freedom of choice do mothers have under current conditions? This problem was discussed time and again in the context of the FAMILYPLATFORM. As a result, it turned out necessary to ask whether other family constellations are unwanted in societies with a focus on female participation in the labour market and a high incidence of institutionalised childcare, or whether the lack of alternatives and traditional concepts allow little scope for egalitarian models. Which structures are needed to ensure true freedom of choice – not only at the political and ideological levels, but also from the point of view of equal opportunities (e.g. equal salaries and the way labour in the family is rewarded in terms of social security and family payments)?

Another area of research is mothers' subjective experiences of active fathers.

- Do they feel insecure or even deprived of their duties? Or does a feeling of relief dominate? Do they have feelings of mistrust and fear?

- How do competence hierarchies develop? Are there any conflicts over the 'best solution' for the child? Are these experiences and feelings different according to particular tasks?

- How do they depend on cultural role models of motherhood and fatherhood? How important are social status and educational attainment levels?

- What is the experience of mothers regarding their social surroundings? Are the partners of active fathers criticised or envied? How does this change according to social spheres and cultural backgrounds?

Given the fact that many of today's mothers are in employment, questions arise as to how to deal with two areas of activity that produce very different demands: what are the resulting effects? Once

companies begin to appreciate family-related skills (BMFSFJ, 2010), what types of esteem do parents receive in their daily life:

- How can the expectations of the various roles be arranged? How is the transfer of roles structured?

- What is the importance of conceptions and practical arrangements regarding childcare in this context?

- Which aspects are mostly associated with stress in both areas? And what type of support would be helpful with regard to the balance of these roles? Which needs for support do parents call for?

3.5.6 The division of labour within the family from the child's point of view

If the division of labour within the family is approached from the child's point of view, two central questions arise. One relates to the contribution of the children to managing everyday life. The other concerns the evaluation and wishes of the children in relation to the solution.

There are certain indications that children are called upon less and less to help with the daily work within the family. How far this can be generalised – particularly Europe-wide – is not known, as the existing data is very sparse. For a child's development, both too little and too much responsibility may be disadvantageous. In the former case, important normative and everyday experiences are lacking. The latter situation may lead to psychological and physical overload under certain conditions. An important question for research therefore arises with regard to children in the everyday life of the family. Their situation should be studied on a Europe-wide scale and be differentiated according to ethnical, regional and socio-economic conditions. The question is, what tasks children carry out at what age and to which extent, and which areas of responsibility they are entrusted with. The answers to these questions might be found through quantitative studies of parents and children (ideally using the diary method form).

It is more difficult to clarify the question of the psycho-social responsibilities with which children are burdened, for example having responsibility for younger siblings, being included in problem situations or parental conflicts, or even taking on the role of confidant or comforter in dealing with the worries and needs of the parents. In these situations, children take on the role of adults and are therefore overburdened. This set of questions is very important from the point of view of the child's development. It is presumably necessary to start with exploratory studies in order to probe the field and develop the questions further that need to be asked, as well as deciding how to evaluate them (e.g. following the example of research into divorce). It should be borne in mind here that widely differing demands may be placed on the children in different family situations or phases (e.g. after the birth of a sibling, after separation or divorce, during times of economic crisis as well as in large families). Specific learning opportunities but also grave risks can emerge from the specific combination of practical and psycho-social demands. In order to evaluate the results, an interdisciplinary group of specialists (particularly psychologists and pedagogues) would be required. These could provide a framework for deciding what an acceptable contribution is in different situations and at what age.

The second aspect in this subject area is the child's perception of the parental division of labour. The latest results show that the children of working parents wish for spending more time with both of their parents. A differentiated analysis of how much time or togetherness children desire would be useful here, and could also show the effects of these aspects at both the individual and societal level. Children need a certain framework and orientation. It is therefore important to understand how

children perceive and envisage daily life in their family. How do they cope with the irregularities of frequent changes? The concrete questions that need to be asked here are as follows:

- How happy are they with their everyday care?

- How do they perceive changing structures of care and family life? Does this make them feel insecure? To what extent do they gain experience that stands them in good stead for later life?

- Are parent-child relationships judged in terms of the amount of time spent together versus the quality of common activities?

- How do children perceive less common family arrangements (e.g. the mother as the main breadwinner)?

- What strategies do they develop to cope with unfavourable situations or to instigate change?

- How is contentment within the family associated with satisfaction with the outside supply of care?

- Can consequences on school, health or psycho-social development be detected?

- What is the influence of the material situation and family form as intervening variables?

- What background dependencies and influences from socio-cultural role models can be deduced?

3.5.7   The division of labour and gender identity

All results available so far show a pronounced gender-specific segregation of the division of labour. Differences are found not only in the varying amounts of work done in the household. To a far greater extent they reflect the different tasks that mothers and fathers take on. In short, they are polarised into the classic 'female' and 'male' areas: he carries out repairs and does jobs with the children; she changes diapers, washes and cleans. Important theoretical attempts at explaining this division of tasks emphasise, above all, the influence of socialisation and the importance of gender identity. Critical comments from biological positions deal with the resistance to change and forms of behaviour: why do these inclinations and preferences not change more markedly when egalitarian structures and attitudes develop (e.g. in the Scandinavian countries, but also in certain population groups)? An explanation of these influencing factors would be of great interest in establishing how far and according to what criteria gender equality can be established. An approach to these questions of basic research requires not only innovative methods (e.g. to obtain a picture of the structures of identity) but also longitudinal perspectives as well as comparisons of culture. In addition, a creative interdisciplinary approach is indispensable.

3.6   Migration and mobility

Spatial mobility and migration is a very important research area as there are rising flows of both phenomena in the European Union and worldwide. They are central aspects of modern life and are amplified by European integration and globalisation.

3.6.1 General remarks

Migration is defined as a permanent change of residence or at least change of residence for a relatively long period. Such migration flows have to be differentiated from mobility. An important characteristic is that the centre of life is transferred to another location. For international migration, national borders are crossed. Concentrating on issues of international migration in the European Union, we have to distinguish between migration flows between European member states and migration flows of third-country nationals into the European Union (Wall *et al.,* 2010a).

Factors motivating migration and spatial mobility include the labour market, the educational system and opportunities, family ties and environmental conditions. Each of these topics is outlined in the following sections in order to provide a background for both processes. To analyse the phenomena, reliable data is, of course, needed. In the following sections, immigration from third-country nationals, intra-European migration and mobility is focussed on in more detail. Additionally, the report concentrates on the relevant facets with regard to the particular mobile situation.

Labour market as pull factor

For both forms of migration flow, the labour market is an important explanatory factor. For the immigration of people with fewer opportunities, the European labour market serves as a pull factor (European Commission, 2000). This is true for migrants with different educational backgrounds. Previous research often concentrated on labour market conditions, and on workers' risks and opportunities (Wall *et al.,* 2010a). Additionally, the family background of the differently qualified mobile persons should be included to a greater extent in research in order to examine the impact of the migration or mobility and changes in the labour market situation on the family. For migrants, it is necessary to distinguish between several places of residence: whether the family stays in the country of origin, whether it migrates together with the worker or whether it migrates after a period of time. If a single person migrates for labour market reasons, how do family formation patterns vary with, for example, the level of education and the labour market position? Are there differences in all the various mechanisms between different European countries and for different countries of origin of the migrants in the different member states?

Many OECD and EU countries have tried to attract highly qualified people from abroad as the economy is increasingly knowledge-intensive and needs more human capital than their own education system can provide. They try to achieve a brain gain strategy – which, from the perspective of the country of origin, is often a brain drain. Unidirectional migration flows produce inequality between countries. This problem is intensified by policies seeking to encourage only high potentials to immigrate and to retain them in the labour market. The same countries often try to minimise their own brain drain and implement attractive policies for repatriates. In both cases, the focus is on individuals and not on families. It is often forgotten that (potential) migrants may have families, and that migrating is unattractive for them. For highly qualified immigrants, as well as for repatriates, more research into the effects on social inequality and family life of brain drain – and accordingly brain gain – is necessary.

A special form of labour market mobility is au pair work. This is often used by young individuals shortly after finishing school. Au pairs are more often female than male, and they often go into families in another country to care for children and improve their foreign language skills. The relevance of this care support and the relationship between au pairs and the families they work for are of interest. According to Hess (2009), au pair work is an immigration strategy for women from Eastern Europe. It has to be ascertained whether this is true for other groups. Additionally, we do not know how an au pair stay influences the relationship between mobile persons and their parents. The

experiences of au pairs are very different, and some of them perceive exploitation, but as there is no comparable data, there is also no reliable information on the frequency of abuse and the question of whether special groups of au pairs are more often affected. Nevertheless, it is impossible to identify on a comparable basis which countries au pairs migrate from (within the EU or third countries) and which ones they migrate to. This is due to the fact that, in almost all EU countries, no information on au pair employment is collected (European Migration Network, 2009). The latter is needed, however, to answer questions, for example, about the further educational achievement or the creation of relationships and family formation of au pairs in the host country.

Educational system

Some people become mobile in order to achieve a certain level of education, a particular degree or special training. This is especially true for intra-European movement and for people with higher degrees. For people migrating from third countries into the European Union, the recognition of their certificates is a problem in some cases (Wall *et al.,* 2010a). The education system may enhance or hinder mobility.

Family ties

Mobility and migration may force family members to live apart. Normally, one assumes that the members of a family want to live in the same dwelling and that family reunification is a significant motivating factor for further mobile behaviour. If no family reunification takes place, one often supposes that intergenerational solidarity is weakened by migration and mobility patterns, but this question has not been analysed in detail. How are intergenerational relationships affected by these processes? And how could the effects of migration and mobility on intergenerational relationships be interpreted? Besides the focus on relationships between generations, it is important to know more about the effects of migration and mobility on family forms and social networks. Are there differences to be found between EU citizens migrating and third-country migrants, for example, due to the greater distance between the country of origin and the country of residence?

Living environment

The living environment can also affect mobility behaviour. For example, adverse conditions in the country of origin such as wars, natural disasters or political persecution, are push factors for migration and asylum-seeking. This can be amplified if the conditions in another region are manifestly better. In the context of climate change, in particular, more climate refugees are to be expected. Besides these dramatic forms, families with small children often prefer a rural environment to an urban one, and therefore tend to move to the countryside.

Reliable and differentiated data

To make reliable statements, consistent data is necessary. It is very hard to compare data on migration and mobility flows as different measurements and concepts are found in the various countries, e.g. of what an immigrant is (see Dumont & Lemaître, 2008; Kupiszewska & Nowok, 2008). The 'regulation on Community statistics on migration and international protection' (Regulation (EC) No 862/2007, European Union, 2007a) is a step towards the harmonisation of measures, but the data collected in this context is not sufficient and detailed enough to answer most of the important research questions. It is essential to evaluate the amount and structure of these processes within the EU. This is important with regard to the different mobile groups and their motivations, and the detection of certain intra-European migration systems over the course of time. On the basis of an institutionalised reporting system on intra-European migration and mobility flows, it would be

possible to describe and analyse different groups. Such a system could also be institutionalised for the migration of third-country nationals into the EU. Here, for example, the preferred destination countries, as well as staying and returning behaviour, could be analysed.

Besides technical and definitional problems, it is important to differentiate flows with regard to types and dimensions. The first dimension is the country of origin and citizenship: it is necessary to distinguish between migrants from other EU countries and from third countries, as there are important differences in the legislation for both groups (Wall *et al.,* 2010a). Immigration may be legal or illegal. Especially with the latter form, specific risks and problems are combined. Above all, it is more difficult to establish and maintain effective contact with irregular immigrants for research purposes. Another important criterion is the extent to which people are mobile of their own volition or not. Furthermore, educational levels are associated, on the one hand, with different opportunities and potential, and on the other, with risks. It is crucially important to differentiate between mobile single persons and families, because the latter are likely to have different problems and different kinds of opportunity. Different patterns of mobility have to be examined – for example, circular and non-circular patterns. In line with this argument, the (planned) length of stay in another country is another important element to be used in differentiating between groups.

With regard to migration, it is important to distinguish between EU citizens and migrants from non-EU countries. There are many differences between these groups such as legal, cultural and identificational ones (Wall *et al.,* 2010a). Against the background of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (European Union, 2007b), European citizens can move freely within most of the EU member states. Migrants from third countries are not allowed to move freely. Different research questions therefore arise. The two groups will be discussed separately in the following sections, beginning with migrants from third countries and then moving on to EU citizens.

3.6.2   Third-country migrants, integration and diversity

The integration of third-country immigrants in the receiving society is perceived to be more difficult and specialised, in that the differences between them and native citizens of European countries are thought to be greater than those between the native citizens of the different member states.

Integration

Regardless of differences in existing definitions, the concept of integration is mainly understood as a process of inclusion of new population groups in existing social structures. Often the goal is for immigrants to take part in all spheres of the host society to the same extent as the natural inhabitants. They are normally expected to learn the local language and to know and act in accordance with the laws. Referring to Heckmann (2001), the receiving society has to meet certain conditions to provide a good basis for this process in the areas of organisation, culture, social life and identification. The links and interdependencies between them have to be studied. It is to be expected, for example, that identification with the receiving society will be associated with success in, for example, structural integration and vice versa (Luft & Schimany, 2010). We do not know what different societal groups perceive as integration. Members of the host society, as well as of different immigrant groups, should be asked about their sense of integration.

In addition to these questions, it is necessary to analyse whether integration is the best way to deal, for example, with cultural differences in a society, or whether ethnic diversity is another possible concept. Assimilation, diversity or exclusion are potential alternatives to integration. Some research

results show that a situation of multiculturalism may have a negative impact on a society and its productivity and stability. According to Luft and Schimany (2010), multiculturalism has lost its popularity since the beginning of the 21st century. The Netherlands are considered to be one example of the failure of this concept (*ibid.*). Other results point in a different direction, and the USA is often seen as a positive example of such an approach. It is therefore necessary to study the conditions under which either integration or ethnic diversity are the better choice for a society.

A further aspect to be analysed in connection with the social facets of immigration is irregular entry. Under EU migration policies, illegal relocation is a priority problem (Triandafyllidou, 2010). CLANDESTINO provides some initial insights into the phenomenon of irregular migration[14]. Its consequences for the migrants in question and their families have to be studied more precisely. This is especially necessary with regard to the opportunities and wellbeing of children (Wall *et al.,* 2010a). In comparison with, for example, the USA, campaigns to legalise or provide amnesty for irregular immigrants are quite rare in Europe (González-Enríquez, 2010; European Migration Network, 2007). Such actions have an impact on the former irregular immigrants and their families. How does this influence, for example, children's chances of playing a full role in the society? Does legalisation lead to family reunification? Comparable campaigns should be evaluated from the societal point of view. This would show whether legalisation produces, for example, increases in tax revenues, more company formations and other positive effects, as well as the negative ones.

In the following, research questions will be raised for each of the four dimensions of integration of third-country nationals.

Structural integration

Structural integration means becoming part of the receiving society in terms of inclusion in its institutions: the economy, the labour market, the educational system, the housing market and the political community (Heckmann, 2001). In this connection, it is crucial to examine all measures to integrate third-country immigrants into society in the different countries of the European Union. These include measures designed specifically for migrants as well as those for all inhabitants. Degrees of structural integration vary between different immigrant groups, for example as far as jobs are concerned: low-paid and low-prestige work is very often done by immigrants. Low social security is often a consequence. This can only be explained to some extent by low qualification levels (Wall *et al.,* 2010a). Immigrants have a higher risk of being affected by inequalities such as income deprivation (Luft & Schimany, 2010), and are sometimes socially excluded from society.

Structural integration in the education system and social mobility

Participation in the education system is an important aspect of structural integration. In many European countries, children of third-country migrants achieve worse results at school than children from the receiving society (Wall *et al.,* 2010a) and those from other EU member states (OECD, 2010e). The extent of this is very different for the various member states and for different groups of immigrants. To create equal education opportunities – which is also a way of facilitating participation in society – it is necessary to analyse the underlying mechanisms. Why do children of some migrant groups achieve worse results at school than those from other groups and children from the host society? On the other hand, why do pupils from parents with certain migration backgrounds achieve better results than children of the receiving country? What is the impact of the fact that a child is itself a migrant rather than having been born in the host society on participation in the education

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system (school achievement, participation in vocational education and training, study rates and lifelong learning)? Education is a sustainable way of being an active part of society and the labour market (Brück-Klingberg *et al.,* 2009). Additionally, higher education avoids poverty as well as other problems. It is also an important factor in social mobility. If third-country immigrants do not have access to higher education, what other measures can the receiving country implement in order to encourage social mobility and prevent conflicts? Intergenerational social mobility is of particular significance here. For native citizens in different European countries, the social situation of the family of origin is known to have a greater or lesser influence on children's future social mobility (Becker, 2009). How far is this mechanism also true for immigrants? While some immigrants have very low levels of educational attainment, their children may reach much higher and thereby become socially mobile. The impact on intergenerational relationships also has to be taken into account.

During the FAMILYPLATFORM proceedings, the discussion on education was not limited to the children of immigrants from non-EU countries. Another question covered the effect different proportions of these migrants in a society have on the education of children of the host society. It is often assumed that children in schools or classes with a high proportion of foreign pupils achieve worse results (Wall *et al.,* 2010c). An examination of this aspect would clarify the real impact of immigrant pupils on the achievement of others. Stereotypes could be reduced, or suitable measures to deal with the problem initiated.

From the point of view of the receiving society, measures encouraging social mobility and inclusion for third-country immigrants have to be studied. What are the societal obstacles and preconceptions such as racism (Castles & Miller, 2003), in the member states?

Housing and living environment

Integration of migrant families could be affected in many ways, for example, by the possibility of having a common domicile or not, as a result of certain laws that delay family reunification. Housing conditions and housing choices also need to be analysed in this context. What is the significance of ethnically segregated neighbourhoods for the integration of individuals and families? It is often assumed that an ethnic colony makes it easier for immigrants to arrive in the new country (Luft, 2009). But in the long run, segregated housing may hinder integration in the receiving society. Research should examine ethnic colonies to assess the conditions they facilitate integration in order to support immigrants arriving and integrating in their new domicile. It is important for town planners to be aware of immigrants' housing choices so as to prevent the emergence of new segregated neighbourhoods and the potential problems associated with them. It is crucial to keep this factor in mind in order to prevent new social inequality, exclusion and segmentation processes in society. These are also key factors in creating a good social environment and sustainable neighbourhoods for migrant as well as native families.

Cultural integration

Cultural convergence is also part of the integration process. This means that there is a behavioural and attitudinal change. Cultural concepts in migrant communities may differ from those in the receiving society, but with significant variations between different groups (e.g. is the cultural difference of immigrants from Saudi Arabia to Sweden expected to be bigger than that of those from Canada to the UK?).

Individual dimension of cultural integration

To understand integration processes, research at the individual level might show how immigrants either try to integrate or to keep the identity of their country of origin. Additionally, their perception of supporting or hindering factors needs to be analysed. Particular points of interest are the attractiveness of the receiving society and what aspects of their home culture third-country nationals see as being worth keeping. Qualitative interviews with different immigrant groups in various European countries are the best way of measuring these aspects. A repeating design (i.e. interviews shortly after immigration, half a year afterwards, one year afterwards, etc.) should be considered. Changes in integration behaviour could thus be observed, and individual pathways in different countries compared. Aspects such as age at the time of immigration, gender, family situation, embeddedness in different social groups, religious practices, level of political participation and opportunities for participation in the host society influence integration (Luft, 2009). Even though several of the intervening factors are known, we need to learn more about how they operate in practice and how strong the impact of the different factors is.

Gender roles in immigrant families

With regard to families and family life, cultural integration seems to be particularly important in connection with gender roles (Bustamante *et al.,* 2011). It is often assumed that the bigger the cultural difference, the more they resemble those of the homeland. To clarify this, an examination of gender roles in different third-country migrant communities as compared with images of their country of origin and those of the host society is necessary. Problems may arise from possible confrontation between home and receiving society values. It is crucial to examine the problems that arise as a result of differences in gender roles within families. Additionally, an analysis of the handling of the problems of couples with and without children is important. Do these problems occur at the level of the couple to the same extent as in two generations of migrants, i.e. between parents from a third country and children who are more socialised in the host society?

Fertility decisions are connected to (gender) roles, values, normative ideas and similar aspects. This is probably one reason why first-generation third-country immigrants have more children than the receiving society. It is anticipated that birth rates will approximate to fertility rates of the new country in the second or possibly the third generation (Wall *et al.,* 2010a), and this can be seen as an indicator of integration. Nevertheless, almost no comparative research exists at the EU level on total fertility rates for the first, second and third generations of immigrants. This data is only available for some countries (Sobotka, 2008). To verify the hypotheses and to analyse differences between immigrant groups from third countries in different European countries, comparative data and information on values and ideals are needed.

Impact of religion

Religion is an important cultural aspect because of its impact on everyday life. This is especially true if third-country immigrants' religions differ from those most widespread in the host societies. This aspect may therefore not be as relevant for some groups of migrants or European countries as for others (Wall *et al.,* 2010a). Religious differences need to be considered and an analysis conducted of how different actors in the receiving country treat them (policy, institutions, citizens, etc.). Religious ideas and affiliations influence families, family formation and family life. Additionally, they influence problems within the family and in each family's relationships with others and, therefore, may affect integration. It is important to evaluate the mechanisms underlying these phenomena in order to support migrants with differing religious backgrounds.

Society and cultural integration

Cultural integration also takes place for members of the receiving society. There are still attitudes of ethnic exclusionism in many EU15 countries (EUMC, 2005). For all EU members, the acceptance of migrants and differences between immigrant groups are to be analysed on a comparative basis for all member states and with regard to intervening factors. Examples of the aspects to be analysed are the proportion of non-nationals, media representation, and historical phenomena such as colonialism. What are the most important factors for the image of immigrants in the different European countries? How do we explain the fact that some aspects, like foreign cuisine, are very easily accepted in the receiving societies and others are not? The extension of food behaviour, i.e. the adoption of foreign dishes, is sometimes thought to be an indicator of integration and tolerance. Is this true or not? It is important to determine the influence of cultural proximity for the acceptance or rejection of new cultural aspects. An analysis and comparison of societies' strategies for encouraging dialogue between cultures and related outcomes might identify best-practice models. This might create a helpful climate for integration in the host society and among immigrant groups.

Social integration – *focus: binational relationships*

Social integration is located at the level of personal relationships (social contacts, friendships, partner choice and membership in associations). International migration has increased the numbers of binational couples (Bustamante *et al.,* 2011). EU-wide, comparative data on the frequency and constellations of binational families is lacking, especially with regard to detailed information on countries of origin and gender aspects (Wall *et al.,* 2010a). This information forms an important basis for analysing these family forms. Binational families have to deal with different cultural, religious and social backgrounds. This is especially true for couples with one European and one third-country partner, whose differences may make it more difficult for them to agree, e.g. on childcare issues, as different gender role concepts are involved (Bustamante *et al.,* 2011). An EU citizen taking a third-country national as partner whose cultural background involves traditional roles could end up with a traditional living arrangement which might involve fewer conflicts than when living with a partner from their own country of origin having a more liberal approach to gender roles. For Germany, it is known that more native women marry foreign men than native men marry foreign women. There are scientific results which suggest that binational relationships are associated with higher educational attainment, success in the labour market, attitudes and belonging to the second immigrant generation (Schroedter, 2006). Hence, it seems that third-country immigrants, who are highly integrated in a structural, cultural and identificational way, are more likely to engage in a relationship with a native person. This affects the chances of the children growing up in these families (e.g. bilingualism and contact with two cultures). More research is needed to achieve a deeper insight into the phenomena of binational families.

Identificational integration

If an immigrant has feelings of belonging to the receiving society at a national, regional and/or local level, (s)he is identificationally integrated (Heckmann, 2001). There are huge differences between the European countries and the different third-country migrant groups in the EU over the use of naturalisation and dual citizenship (Eurostat Press Office, 2010). This can be interpreted as a measure of the degree of identification. Nevertheless, it is not yet known why these measures are used or not by immigrants and their offspring. Does naturalisation affect (intergenerational) relationships with

relatives in the country of origin? How do these processes appear for different family forms with different generations of migrants?

3.6.3   Migration from one EU country to another

Intra-European migration for educational reasons

For Europeans migrating from one European member state to another, education is a very important factor in their desire to be mobile. This is especially true for higher education. The European Union supports international lifelong learning through several programmes for different age groups or stages in the life-course: Comenius for pupils at school, Erasmus for higher education (university), Leonardo da Vinci for vocational education and training, and Grundtvig for adult education (Education and Culture DG, 2011). The programmes are extensively used and enhance the exchange of Europeans for educational reasons. One criterion for analysing inequality is which countries are chosen as destinations for educational reasons. Though there are several reports and studies on different aspects of education and related mobility (Education and culture DG, 2010), several key questions have still not been asked. There is no study comparing who is mobile for educational reasons in different European countries. Differences between the European countries with regard to the participation of different social, ethnic or gender groups in the educational system (Wall *et al.,* 2010a; Reiska *et al.,* 2010a) need to be studied. The influence of European programmes on these differences has to be analysed as well.

The decision to migrate to a particular country for educational reasons is another possible aspect in analysing inequalities. Different stages in the life-course and the country of origin have to be taken into account as intervening factors. After an educational process in a foreign country, young educated people decide whether they want to stay, return to their home country or move elsewhere. These decisions and underlying reasons should be examined separately for different groups of persons in the education system and for different member states. Qualitative methods seem to be the most suitable ones here. The choice of where to live after the completion of an educational course affects inequality: some countries pay for the education of young people from other countries who tend to return to their home countries and take their human capital and the knowledge gathered in the other member state with them (Glorius & Matuschewski, 2009). Do some countries benefit more than others from international education flows?

Transnationalism

Integration is just one concept used to analyse migration. Another one is transnationalism. The specific thing about this concept is that it regards migration processes between two or even more countries as a normal component of the life-course in a globalised world (Castles & Miller, 2003). Migration is seen as an on-going process, and people change their abode a number of times. These processes go along with the evolution of transnational systems and as the cross-cutting of national borders, specific cultures, transnational social practices and symbols evolve. The structures involved here are transnational in that they include aspects of various countries. Migrants often identify themselves with their country of origin and at least one other state. Transnationalism is a concept that complements integration: both may apply to particular groups.

Against the background of free movement of persons within most of the EU member states, research should focus on the development and empirical commonness of transnational systems in Europe. Until now, we have not known whether it is possible to identify a special group of migrants having a transnational way of life, so it would be useful to develop empirical instruments and precise

definitions for this area. On the basis of these innovations, a characterisation of persons with transnational attributes and of the transnational system is possible. Furthermore, it is possible to analyse the connections and social realities of different groups and their impact on their personal and family life.

Research projects should begin with analyses of migration processes and determine what countries are strongly connected by international circular migration. These insights would make it possible to focus on how to identify a transnational system, and how it might be characterised if it does indeed exist. On this basis, migrants should be characterised according to their socio-economic status, family situation and subjective feeling of belonging.

3.6.4   Mobility and its impacts on family life

People often move in search of a (better) job, (more) job opportunities, higher income or better educational opportunities for their children. With EURES[15], the European Union provides a platform for encouraging labour market mobility. From the point of view of policies and firms, mobility is often a necessity, and almost everybody is expected to be (potentially) mobile. When formulating these demands, people are often seen as individuals and not as being embedded in families, social networks, social responsibilities and other important aspects of life. Spatial mobility and its impact on families have been studied to some extent (Schneider & Meil, 2008; Schneider & Collet, 2010). It is well-known, for example, that highly mobile people tend to postpone the transition to parenthood. This process seems to be influenced by their socio-cultural origin. Mobility is a critical factor in wellbeing, because it affects the quality of relationships. Long-distance mobility often leads to living apart-together relationships or long-distance relationships. These forms are thought to give rise to more problems, as it is more difficult to build trust and jointly create a normal everyday life. This is even more challenging for couples with children. Their daily life is different from other families in that they have to cope with specific problems affecting the wellbeing of family members. Another effect of mobility is reduced satisfaction with one's own life as a result of distance from the family and long commuting times. There is, however, a lack of research on what factors intensify or diminish the effects of mobility.

Research should analyse how families deal with the requirement to be flexible when faced with such situations, and how different family forms react according to different forms of spatial flexibility (long-term, short-term, long-distance and short-distance). All kinds of mobility clearly produce changes in everyday routines. Daily long-distance commuting affects families. Different members of the family end up having less time together and have to develop alternative routines for their everyday life. We lack research on how they do this and on the problems that may arise in the process according to (in)voluntary mobility. We also need to analyse how commuting relationships are organised in living apart-together situations. Is it mostly one partner who commutes, or do both partners travel to an almost equal extent? How is this affected by having children? The organisation of the division of labour is a problem for commuter families when not all members live in the same place. After a phase of living apart-together for reasons of mobility, do families revert to earlier routines? What problems, instabilities and insecurities arise in the relationship, and how are they resolved in different types of families? What factors influence this process? How do children perceive a situation in which one of their parents is mobile and they can, for example, only spend the weekends together? What role do new communication technologies play helping families to maintain contact in a living apart-together situation? It is necessary to answer these questions to

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help couples manage mobile situations, to prevent them from postponing the decision to become parents or breaking up too long, and to improve all family members' wellbeing.

The decision to be mobile as a couple or family affects the careers of both spouses and has a potential impact on the schooling of the children and the social network of all family members. For all these aspects, differences between the European countries and how to explain these differences according to institutional settings have to be studied.

In a context of an increasing need for mobility for all employees (not only those with high potential), the problems mentioned above are likely to increase and become more pronounced. More research in this area is crucial for creating the basis for new policies.

3.6.5   Policies on migration and mobility

Since policies regulate migration and mobility, it is evident that policy measures have to be analysed and evaluated. This is especially important with regard to immigration policies, in particular the growing restrictions on family reunion, and to integration policies, as problems in integration can clearly be seen (e.g. riots by immigrant youth, as in France, and anti-minority campaigns, as in the Netherlands). It is necessary to analyse and compare migration policies in the member states of the European Union in order to assess the advantages and disadvantages of the different measures. Which policies help or hinder migrants and society as a whole? Are there different integration policies for non-national groups? If there are, is it possible to evaluate how these differences help or hinder the chances of abolishing segregation? How well do policies match the needs of immigrants and their families and children on the one hand and society on the other hand? Are immigration and integration policies at different levels, i.e. regional, national and EU, integrated and convergent, or are they inconsistent and thus creating problems? What is done in the member states to integrate different policies in order to serve the purpose of a successful holistic approach to integration? With regard to integration, not only the incorporation of different policies is to be analysed but also the question of how effective different measures are in supporting migrants to integrate in the host society. Some policies may be detrimental – but which? How can they be detected and reversed? This work is of critical importance in connection with policies affecting families and family life. A possible way of fostering the exchange of best-practice models at the communal level is the CLIP-network[16], a network of European cities working together to support the integration of immigrants.

In addition to migration and integration policies, policies to encourage mobility have to be analysed for their effects on families. What are the impacts of policies that force the unemployed into mobility even if they have a family that is unable to be mobile? How does this affect family life, family decisions and the wellbeing of all family members? How do children perceive forced mobility? The results of such investigations could help policymakers see people as being embedded in social structures and not only as individuals and, in addition, remind them that policies have consequences for the family (family mainstreaming).

3.7   Inequalities and insecurities

From the outset, inequality and diversity of families were major topics in the FAMILYPLATFORM discussions. As these are so-called cross-cutting aspects, some particularly important themes need to be mentioned here. During the preparation phase of the research agenda, the focus in the discussion

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[16]   http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/populationandsociety/clip.htm [accessed 21/03/2011]

of key issues was shifting constantly. New topics emerged in this way, while others were abandoned. Two opposite opinions were expressed. On the one hand, the majority of participants maintained that emphasis should be on those questions arising with the greatest frequency and on the largest target groups. On the other hand, it was argued that research should focus on minorities and their social positions in particular. This process resulted in research topics of varying importance and scope being dealt with at different levels. This chapter examines a range of additional topics that address key aspects: insecurity and inequality.

Social inequalities and financial deprivation

It was shown during the discussions that inequality has many facets, with material deprivation being a major concern. Although Europe is a highly developed and fairly rich continent, we have to point out that about 17 per cent of its citizens are at risk of falling into poverty (Eurostat, 2010c). The risks for children are significantly higher in this context (20 per cent) than the average of all Europeans (Wall *et al.,* 2010a). There are large-scale differences with regard to nation, region, social class, ethnic group and age cohort as well as the form and size of family in which individuals live. In general, a very important reason for poverty is unemployment. These facts should be enough to highlight why material inequality is an area that demands more in-depth research. More information is needed in order to improve our social systems and the wellbeing of families and their children. As in many other research areas, a need for more cross-national comparative data has been identified, especially regarding the missing data on social inequalities in the context of family life (Wall *et al.,* 2010c). Basic information is needed not only on the 'income' indicator, but also on issues such as "education, living conditions, housing, cultural indicators, social mobility" (*ibid.*: 91).

Research on income poverty falls short in (at least) two ways (Wall *et al.*, 2010a): it helps in identifying the poor, but fails to provide information on the process and the experiences of people who are at risk or are counted as being among the poor. First, families could suffer from one of many diverse forms of deprivation, for example, educational deprivation, illiteracy, lack of social acceptance etc. This disconnects them and their children from societal participation in very important areas. Furthermore, it reduces their opportunities for future development and success, especially for children. Thus, huge efforts have to be made in modelling new measurements and scales in order to gain an insight into these 'weak' indicators of social deprivation. To progress with these ideas, more explorative and qualitative studies are necessary (Wall *et al.,* 2010c). Additionally, we need studies able to model the movement into and out of poverty, while also taking into account several other important dimensions and their impact on these developments.

We also need more insight into how the so-called (or defined) poor families struggle against their situation, and what impacts this has on the development and the future opportunities of their children. Some people are able to deal with financial deprivation by using a combination of resources and, furthermore, manage to give their children an adequate education so that they are able to improve their position in society. Others do not. The latter lose dignity, choice and control. It is necessary to find out what factors are causing those different reactions to deprivation risks, what auxiliary resources people can use or rely on, and how they can achieve them or be guided to them.

When looking into the process of becoming poor and getting out of this risk (*ibid.*), there has to be more research exploring the family as a unit. From this point of view, an analysis is required of how resources are tapped and exchanged and what role emotional capital plays. These questions should not only address the nuclear family but also the wider family network. Relationships and support networks over three generations at least have to be taken into account. This does not mean losing sight of the individual, especially the children in their specific situation. The primary focus on the

wellbeing of children is absolutely essential, as available data shows that families play an important role in the reproduction of social inequalities.

Violence

Family violence and, more generally, violence in the social environment, is a topic with many facets. Considering the variety of nations within the EU, it has to be noted that there are differing definitions of violence as such across nations and cultures (OECD, 2010f). Corresponding to these definitions, there are also varying sanctions. Closely related to this is the fact that the risk of individuals experiencing violence also varies. There are huge differences in the likelihood that men, women, children, the elderly, disabled people, as well as people in institutions or private care and individuals from certain social groups or living in specific areas, etc. will become victims of violent acts (see Wall *et al.*, 2010b, Hagemann-White *et al.,* 2008).

The problem with attempting a scientific approach to this area is not only that it is complex, but also that taboos and different levels of acceptance impede access to it. Thus, it is characterised by a high number of unreported cases and our overall knowledge is insufficient. It is difficult to evaluate current data on the estimated number of reported and unreported cases, because there are many different ways of data acquisition and collection. An interdisciplinary and transcultural approach is needed to combine creative methods with a solid review of the socio-cultural and legal framework and, at the same time, to take practical aspects such as changes in socio-political conditions, opportunities for intervention and education into account.

First of all, a common and standardised definition of violence must be developed in order to analyse basic data from public sources, police statistics, case statistics from courts and district attorneys' offices as well as information from institutions for victim counselling. It is very likely that this definition needs to be gendered (Wall *et al.*, 2010b). Efforts to generate knowledge have been made in social science research on violence as well as in the battle against violence, and particularly concerning violence against women. Attempts have been made at conducting representative surveys (for example in Germany: GIG-NET, for violence against men, see BMFSFJ, 2004) and to obtain an overall view of the issue at the European level (e.g. Eurobarometer, 2010).

According to national and cross-national comparative studies, there are several different methodological approaches involving different concepts for measuring violence and different time horizons. However, the use of common methodological techniques is essential to obtain comparable results. Thus, it is crucial to develop advanced measures, comparative methods and a consensus on these standards, to match the required common definition of violence. There is a great need for more precise findings on the situation of specific target groups (e.g. family members or people with different social backgrounds and ethnic minorities). This could be achieved through more qualitative analyses (Hagemann-White *et al.,* 2008; Martinez *et al.,* 2007).

It is a central and paramount challenge to create access to this field, in particular to victims and offenders, in order to estimate the prevalence of certain types of violence and different victim groups. The target groups, which are particularly difficult to reach here, are not only children and men, but also the elderly and the disabled. The course of action should be as representative as possible, so that we may obtain empirically sound and internationally comparable information, e.g. on the prevalence of various forms of violence. Target group-specific approaches should be included in order to do justice to the complexity of the phenomenon. To eliminate the present deficit, qualitative studies are required that will shed some light on access paths, special interpretations of forms of violence, types of denial, and relationships between victims and offenders. Creative and exploratory approaches are, therefore, required in virtually all areas. Access problems affect all the

victim groups, but it is the victimology of men, children and the elderly, in particular, which is little developed. In addition, comparable prevalence studies on these target groups in Europe are needed. A sensitive approach is required to investigate abuse in care relationships, and new methods must be developed. In terms of potential offenders and areas that harbour a higher risk of violence, research gaps and differences also have to be dealt with. In this connection, the aim is to make progress in risk assessment and prevention. However, co-ordinated research should also go ahead on the impact of violence on health, both physical and mental. It would be important to analyse information on the experience of both victimisation and perpetrating violence (*ibid.*). In this context, it would also be necessary not to think bi-directionally (concentrating only on the perpetrators' and the victims' points of view), but to understand violence as a highly complex interactive process and to search for cultural patterns of explanation as well as the potential for change. Not until this foundation is established can headway be made in examining and treating violence at the European level. It is indispensable to process experiences of violence – in both a cultural and semantic manner – in order to find out more about different 'constructs of normality', subjective appraisals (e.g. shame thresholds and inhibitions) and corresponding tolerances.

In our culture area, sensitivity and public attention to the effects of violence on children have increased. Nevertheless, real progress with corresponding empirical studies has not been made, nor has it been made in respect of violence in families in general, violence against men, and violence in foster care. It is particularly important to compensate for the deficit in knowledge and methods with regard to children as victims of violence and also regarding child offenders. Appropriate age-specific measures and indirect indicators to assess abuse, negligence and psychological violence need to be developed (e.g. studies of case statistics from the courts, and police statistics).

Minorities

There was a demand for a sharper focus on a wider range of social groups in future research. This is particularly the case for minorities such as ethnic groups and national minorities, e.g. the Roma, who are most numerous in Romania, Spain, the former territory of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Hungary[17]; the Basques in France and Spain; and the Sorbs in Germany (Malloy, 2005; European Commission, 2004). These groups often suffer from social and financial disadvantage, including having a lower standing within society and fewer opportunities in the labour market, as well as a higher risk of unemployment (Turton, 1999). It is important to improve the social and economic circumstances of ethnic minorities in order to move closer to the goal of abolishing social discrimination. In this context, it would be important to evaluate the different national policies with regard to their success in integrating these groups into society as equal citizens by simultaneously recognising their background and traditions. In doing so, it would be interesting to find out how the different policy strategies affect their wellbeing and how they see their role in society. Research into the question of how the rest of the population experiences these minorities could be an important indicator of the extent of societal recognition and equality for the ethnic groups under discussion.

Apart from national minorities, special family constellations are also regarded as marginal groups, e.g. rainbow families or those with homosexual parents (Rupp, 2009). Of course, we recognise them as self-evident subgroups in the context of family forms (see 3.4). But as this group is often faced with discrimination, particularly when it comes to recognition and family formation, they should be brought slightly more into focus. It was suggested that there could be better and more effective evaluation of the relationship between practices and policies towards them, at several different

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[17]   The Roma are not seen as *national minorities* in all of the countries mentioned here.

levels, including the individual, the local and the national. Another field in which information is lacking is the investigation of potential differences between policies on gay/lesbian couples, on the one hand, and heterosexual couples on the other hand. In this respect, research should also give us a deeper insight into the differential consequences of such policies for family life of homosexual and heterosexual couples. How are these families affected by practices and policies and what are the impacts of these policies on same-sex couples and their children?

Living environment

The living environment has a considerable impact on the wellbeing of families, as do other interrelated dimensions: nature (e.g. the existence or absence of green open spaces, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, air pollution, freshwater resources, etc.), neighbourhood (e.g. public transport, noise, the existence or fear of crime) and housing (e.g. the number of people per household, living space, quality standards, etc.). All these factors are important for the satisfaction of residents. Future urban planning needs to be comprehensive and should take these different aspects into account (Kapella *et al.*, 2011). "Good living conditions (...) are not equally distributed across Europe or within different social groups" (Reiska *et al.*, 2010a: 84), and particularly poorer people, foreign minorities or people from rural areas tend to have problems with low-quality housing. Quality of life inequalities reflect the economic and social situation (Reiska *et al.*, 2010b; Bolte *et al.*, 2009). In this context, it would be important to know whether 'bad' living environments affect further opportunities more negatively than living conditions in general (e.g. family situation, economic situation, health etc.) (Reiska *et al.*, 2010a). Neighbourhood as a community is expected to become increasingly important to care and support issues in future. For these reasons, it is necessary to study different ways and consequences of balancing social welfare services with community solidarity (Kapella *et al.*, 2011).

One important connection to the living environment in the context of social inequalities is the process of transition into parenthood: the question arises as to whether there is an influence on childbearing decisions, in particular, and how family policies react to the effect of housing and its costs on fertility behaviour (Wall *et al.,* 2010c). Furthermore, it would be important to know if and in what way families have worse chances living in an adequate environment compared to that of people without children, including aspects such as living space, safety and access to green areas. The question is whether they are discriminated against in their preferred environment due to the fact that families are often regarded as rather unattractive neighbours. Are families likely to have fewer opportunities because they have less money at their disposal?

According to the state of the art of current research (Reiska *et al.*, 2010a) (referring to the "Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Policy"), data on the living environment is satisfactory only with regard to housing, which is covered by several larger databases (e.g. ECHP, EU-SILC, OECD and SHARE), with the exception of the distribution of homeless people or those living in emergency shelters. Detailed research studies do not cover the whole of the EU and its member states, however, but often only one or two countries or cities. In addition, there is no statistical information available on safety and crime at the EU level, but only for OECD members. In this respect, it was proposed to use victimisation surveys to estimate the occurrence of crime and the resulting levels of fear. It was also suggested that the different related categories of "housing, neighbourhood and closer natural environment as a whole", which are "closely connected to each other" (*ibid*.: 85) should be examined.

The best available data relates to member states of the EU15. Data for new and the newest member states is rather scarce. It was, therefore, suggested that candidate states should be included in future

research programmes. Furthermore, there is a need for pertinent, comprehensive, comparable, country-specific and detailed research projects considering living environments and neighbourhoods. For this purpose, it would be important to try and harmonise conceptual definitions, especially in the light of the fact that measures of residents' satisfaction are rather subjective (Reiska *et al.*, 2010a).

3.8   Media and new information technologies

Development in the field of the media has been so multi-faceted and wide-ranging that it seems impossible to outline all areas requiring further research. In our modern societies, the media is nearly omnipresent. In order to use media, certain equipment, skills and know-how are necessary. Some kinds of media – like TV or the telephone – are available in almost every family (European Commission, 2010c) and are closely tied in with the organisation of everyday life. Others, however, are available with limitations or to a certain degree depending on social differences only. Some thus act socio-selectively, since not everyone has access to them – partly because of the costs. The use of media structures family life, makes demands on resources, and increases the demand for new skills, which are not common to everybody (Livingstone & Das, 2010a). The extent of availability of media causes great social differences and contributes to social inequality, which can particularly affect children, and it also has effects on family management and relationships. The latter is a topic on its own. Hence, not only families themselves, but also family sciences need to deal with developments in the field of the media in a thorough and critical manner.

In general, there is a deficit in comparative Europe-wide research on the use of media in families (Livingstone & Das, 2010b; Wall *et al.,* 2010c). There is a need for data that is as profound as it is meaningful in order for scientists to draw conclusions and to provide policy makers with appropriate recommendations for action. Such data needs to be collected for identifiable age groups and has to be specific enough to show up differences in media literacy and consumption between social classes, ethnicities and different cultures. Research must look not only at media consumption but also at the environment in which this takes place and allows or hinders (particular forms of) consumption, and the entire media diets of families and each of its members. Furthermore, future research in the wide area of the media needs to pool questions and outcomes from a greater range of familiar sciences such as psychology, sociology and communication studies in order to learn from the knowledge already gained in those areas and to specify future research questions (Livingstone & Das, 2010b).

Research has to focus on two directions of influence: the first is how trends in media development and expansion shape family life and behaviour. We should thus look at the development of communication and its frequency between family members (and others) as well as information flow used by them and the risks combined with the new opportunities. Secondly, looking at the flow of communication from the other direction, it is essential to understand what trends in family life influence the development of and the demand for (particular) media. Here, the question arises which social groups determine and characterise trends, and which families are likely to be excluded. The more specific questions to be answered are as follows: how do family members deal with having access to various types of media at any time? What impact do media have on relationships, autonomy, security, stress and fear? How do families afford the costs and how do they acquire the skills for the (new) media? How do they renounce or maintain privacy, have time for real conversation, real games etc.?

It is important to establish how children are developing under the increasing influence of media, in particular virtual and online media, especially with regard to their growing use of the internet (Livingstone & Das, 2010a). Do children have different emotional needs nowadays, because of their greater exposure to media, video games, etc.? A critical reflection on increased media use may help

to determine whether certain types of media have a particular appeal (video games, social networking platforms, etc.) to children in special life situations or those coping with specific problems, or whether they simply constitute part of their leisure activities. There is still some uncertainty about personal problems, particularly on the internet. Websites and online communities, for example, may provide easily accessible information on coping mechanisms that may, in the end, be harmful (e.g. bulimia, drugs, self-inflicted injuries, suicide). It would thus be crucial to know how far children and young adults (are willing to) rely on media sources in situations where professional help would be more appropriate.

While media may help people to cope with certain issues (through communities to discuss weight issues, sexual identity, etc. with others who have the same 'problem'), they also pose threats to individual wellbeing. How do children cope with peer discrimination and how can they learn to set and respect personal boundaries, now that engagement in virtual social platforms is of great importance? How can children learn to develop healthy self-esteem and self-perception? In what ways do children perceive the dangers of disclosing personal information to a wider public on online platforms, and how can children be sensitised to these issues? Bullying of children on online platforms is another important issue that has to be evaluated further in order to provide instructions for parents to cope with these issues within the family. It is also important to provide basic information on these new issues for professionals, so they can help in the right way. In order to avoid children slipping away into parallel worlds of virtual communities and games, it is necessary to find out what these activities mean to them. It is furthermore necessary to sensitise children and young adults to reflect about the relationship between real life and online networks, so as to give them the chance to realise when they may be drifting into virtual worlds. If they feel the need to escape from real life, it is important to assist them with their real-life challenges and show them ways of coping with everyday problems as well as other, more fundamental, issues. In this regard, it would be important to know how children, young adults and parents respond to online risks (Livingston & Das, 2010a).

Another point in this context is that many parents feel increasingly insecure about the media exposure of their children, as most children or young adults use media in their private rooms. There is also a fear that content may not be appropriate (European Commission, 2008). It would therefore be important "to support parents to be able to give guidance to their children in how to use internet and develop correctively their mediating role" (Wall *et al.,* 2010c: 110).

With regard to the gendered and sexualised media representations of men and women, it would be important to understand how children can be assisted to cope with these imposed media representations. Do children need assistance in order to think about themselves in a healthy way in contrast to media images, which often portray idealised bodies, stereotypical behaviour or questionable justifications for actions?

Virtual communication, especially between family members who do not live in the same area or country, has become increasingly important in the context of globalisation, flexibility and mobility. What possible effects will these developments have on emotional attachment and contentment in connection with intergenerational relationships?

Research on the use of the media by the older generations is also relevant, with media being increasingly important for elderly people. While media and ITC use by younger people is already being researched, there has not been enough analysis to differentiate sufficiently within this age group. There are specially designed mobile phones for older people, and the technology of cell phone transmission is even being used in the medical area (e.g. cardiac pacemakers transmitting health data to the doctor via satellite). Considering that nowadays, people spend many years after retirement in a life phase where they remain physically active, media and technology may specifically enhance

their lives and activities. Several questions arise here: how do media reception and expectations regarding media formats change among the older population? What are the special needs of the elderly when making use of popular media? Does media content need to be presented in a special way for people of old age? How can media and technological innovations help them to remain independent for as long as possible (e.g. with regard to 'eHealth')?

4 Conclusion: Research and social innovation

Central societal trends include globalisation, demographic change, developments in gender roles and the processes of education and employment, as well as increasing multiplicity and change in family life. They lead to new demands on the framework of families and family policy. In order to achieve such political aims as sustainable growth and gender equality, it is necessary to recognise the relationship between policy measures, societal conditions and decisions taken at both the individual and the family level. This is essential to remove obstacles as well as to be able to provide the necessary support. The present research agenda is one step towards making this know-how available in that it outlines future research needs and raises key questions.

As the subject of family is broad in scope, the research agenda concentrates on the central aspects that were discussed and identified by FAMILYPLATFORM. Furthermore, it formulates these as research areas and, to this end, provides essential advice on the related methodological requirements. The report draws mainly on information available at the European level, as detailed insights into the status of research have already been provided in the description in the so-called Existential Field reports (Kuronen, 2010). Because the topic of family is so comprehensive, and since so many factors influence it, decisions had to be made that narrowed down the content of the research agenda. The main areas of research, worked out by the members of the Consortium of the FAMILYPLATFORM in conjunction with the Advisory Board, and discussed at length, were as follows: the monitoring and evaluation of policy measures and strategies; the area of care; family studies oriented to the life-course and various family forms; the area of doing family; and the challenges that occur as a result of migration and mobility. Many other themes were discussed, and are included here as research areas in a shortened form. The roadmap for future family research in Europe is divided into five main areas and a number of subsidiary areas, including violence, insecurity, deprivation, environment, media, family education and minorities.

To sum up, it can be said that, with regard to official statistics, more data is required, and with greater differentiation. Furthermore, for particular subjects like transitions within the family biography, it is necessary to carry out longitudinal studies. In order to gain a deeper insight into motivation and decision-making processes, qualitative and innovative methods are required. To this end, it would be generally advisable to establish mixed methods to assess the complex areas of research in order to pool various sources of information (e.g. initial surveys, secondary analyses, expert interviews, case study analyses, etc.). There was a need perceived for the use of new media (e.g. the internet) and new methods of research and access to the target groups in various areas, for example with regard to the study of violence, as well as the media themselves.

A further important aspect of discussion was the need for the development of advanced indicators, for example for the material situation of families as well as for the concept of 'wellbeing' or the measurement of unpaid work. The implementation of common and standardised indicators in Europe-wide research is as essential as the inclusion of all the Member States and the expansion of research to include candidate countries. It would be helpful to establish a co-ordinating body, which drives this development forward and monitors compliance with these standards. Although a lot of research into the family has been and is being done, there is still a great deal to be achieved. This is especially true with regard to the further development of research into family policies in Europe.

An important result of the FAMILYPLATFORM was that stakeholders suggested tackling recent societal challenges by fostering, evaluating and spreading social innovations. Examples of social

innovations could be found at the regional level. During the forecasting exercises, in particular, the participants identified ideas for social innovation in terms of certain challenges, which have been outlined in the table below.

Area/Societal Challenge:	Social Innovation Themes:	Action and Measures (examples)
Care: how could sustainable and inclusive care arrangements be provided in future Europe?	Enhancing care relations within families Matching family care work with external care provision Supporting community solidarity	Programmes supporting three-generation housing New public-private partnerships ICT assisted care giving and care receiving Community networks
Life-Course and transitions: how to support family transitions in life course?	Easing the 'rush-hours of life' Enabling couples to have the number of children they desire Social negotiation, new father and mother models	'Time care insurance' or a 'time credit account' including an amount of years that can be taken to care for others Mediation and counselling centres
'Doing family': how to help families to manage their everyday life?	Putting a value on unpaid work Family-friendly companies	The 'skills market' (exchange of support) as a factor in social cohesion
Migration and mobility: how to promote social integration?	Local participation	Local alliances for families

The table shows the four challenges and the corresponding types of innovation discussed in FAMILYPLATFORM. The right-hand column shows some examples of actions and measures to cope with these challenges and innovations (for more details, see Kapella *et al.,* 2011). Some of these actions and measures are already found at the local level and should be researched in order to disseminate best practices, others are new and could be implemented and researched in pilot projects or action research.

This gives rise to the question of how policy can assist in social innovation, with a view to meeting the challenges mentioned above. Based on our experiences within FAMILYPLATFORM we can say that social platforms have the potential to call social innovations into being. They bring together researchers, experts, policy makers, social partners and representatives from family and grassroots organizations to create a think tank. By combining several techniques of moderation and approaches (e.g. the "foresight" approach, future scenarios, the Delphi and Desmodo methods, focus groups), they help to foster creative concepts, action plans and policy measures. Social platforms like

FAMILYPLATFORM are providing social settings in which participants are confronted with the points of view of other experts (and which they have often never encountered before). This sometimes produces irritation, because established ways of thinking are altered. If participants move towards each other with respect, such irritation may be a positive starting point for creative group processes producing new ideas for social innovation. Thus was indeed the experience gathered by participants in FAMILYPLATFORM.

Against this background we suggest 'challenge projects' to be funded by EU-research programmes and also by national research to tackle the following issues: Care, Life-Course and Transition, Doing Family, Migration and Mobility. They should combine multidisciplinary research approaches with social platforms and action research, including a wide range of different research disciplines, stakeholder representatives and policy makers. These projects will not only provide fruitful knowledge and answers to the questions raised in this research agenda, but also vital ideas for social innovation.

Uwe Uhlendorff, Marina Rupp, Matthias Euteneuer

III Annexes

1   References

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2   List of deliverables and outcomes of FAMILYPLATFORM

State of the Art of Research on Family and Family Policies in Europe

1. Family Structures and Family Forms in the European Union: An overview of major trends and developments

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27689

Loreen Beier, Dr. Dirk Hofäcker, Elisa Marchese, and Dr. Marina Rupp
State Institute for Family Research, University of Bamberg

2a. Family Developmental Processes

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27690

Department of Sociology and Social Research, University of Milan-Bocacca
Carmen Leccardi & Miriam Perego

2b. Transitions into Parenthood

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27691

Institute for Educational Sciences, University of Tübingen in Germany
Barbara Stauber

3. Major Trends of State Family Policies in Europe

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27692

Sonja Blum and Christiane Rille-Pfeiffer
Austrian Institute for Family Studies, University of Vienna

4a. Family and Living Environment: Economic Situation, Education levels, Employment and Physical living environment
http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27693

Epp Reiska, Ellu Saar and Karl Viilmann
Institute of International and Social Studies, Tallinn University

4b. Local politics: Programmes and best practice model
http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27694

Francesco Belletti and Lorenza Rebuzzini
Forum delle Associazioni Familiari

5. Patterns and trends of Family Management in the European Union

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27695

Zsuzsa Blaskó & Veronika Herche
Demographic Research Institute, Budapest

6a. Social Care and Social Services - Literature review on existing European comparative research

Marjo Kuronen, Kimmo Jokinen and Teppo Kröger
Family Research Centre & Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy /Social Work, University of Jyväskylä

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27696

6b. The Professional Standards of Care Workers – The Development of Standards for Social Work and Social Care Services for Families
http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27697

Aila-Leena Matthies
Kokkola University Consortium (Finland)

7. Social Inequality and Diversity of Families

Karin Wall, Mafalda Leitão & Vasco Ramos
Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27698

8. Media, communication and information technologies in the European family

Sonia Livingstone and Ranjana Das
Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27699

Appendix to the Report – Special Focus Pieces

Myria Georgiou, Leslie Haddon, Ellen Helsper & Yinhan Wang
Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27699

Civil Society Perspective: Family Organisations at the Local, National, European and Global Level – Three Case Studies

Linden Farrer (COFACE), Lorenza Rebuzzini (FDAF), Liverani Aurora (FDAF), Anne-Claire de Liedekerke (MMM), Jill Donnelly (MMM) & Marie-Liesse Mandula (MMM)

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27703

Research on Families and Family policies in Europe: State of the Art

Marjo Kuronen (ed.)
Family Research Centre, University of Jyväskylä

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27686

Critical Review of the Existing Research on Families

Critical Review of Research on Families and Family Policies in Europe http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27687	Karin Wall, Mafalda Leitão and Vasco Ramos, Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon
Families: A Summary of the Situation in Europe Today (booklet) http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27726	Linden Farrer & William Lay (COFACE), Uwe Uhlendorff & Matthias Euteneuer (Technical University Dortmund), Anne-Claire de Liedekerke (World Movement of Mothers Europe (MMMEurope))
Realities of Mothers in Europe http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27685	Joan Stevens, Julie de Bergeyck & Anne-Claire de Liedekerke World Movement of Mothers Europe (MMMEurope)

Future of Families

Documentation of the Results of the Future Scenarios http://www.familyplatform.eu/en/doc/299/WP3_Output_1_Documentation_Future_Scenarios.pdf	Olaf Kapella (ed.), Austrian Institute for Family Studies, University of Vienna
Wellbeing of Families in Future Europe – Key Policy and Research Issues http://www.familyplatform.eu/en/doc/302/WP3_Output_2_Key_Policy%26Research_Issues.pdf	Anne-Claire de Liedekerke & Julie de Bergeyck, World Movement of Mothers Europe (MMMEurope)
Foresight Report: Facets and Preconditions of Wellbeing of Families http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27688	Olaf Kapella (Austrian Institute for Family Studies), Anne-Claire de Liedekerke & Julie de Bergeyck (MMMEurope)

Research Agenda on the Family

A Research Agenda on the Family for the European Union (booklet)

Marina Rupp, Loreen Beier, Anna Dechant & Christian Haag (State Institute for Family Research, University of Bamberg), and Linden Farrer (Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union).

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27709

Cross-Cutting Publications

Online Journal Vol. 1: Structures & Forms

Epp Reiska (ed.)
The Institute for International and Social Studies of Tallinn University, Estonia

http://www.familyplatform.eu/en/doc/111/FAMILYPLATFORM_OJ_VOL1.pdf

Online Journal Vol. 2: Solidarities in Contemporary Families

Carmen Leccardi & Miriam Perego (eds.)
Department of Sociology and Social Research, University of Milan-Bicocca

http://www.familyplatform.eu/en/doc/254/FAMILYPLATFORM_OJ_VOL2.pdf

Online Journal Vol. 3: Demographic Change and the Family in Europe

Veronika Herche (ed.) Demographic Research Institute, Central Hungarian Statistical Office

http://www.familyplatform.eu/en/doc/309/FAMILYPLATFORM_OJ_VOL3.pdf

Online Journal Vol. 4: Volunteering in Families

Anne-Claire de Liedekerke, Joan Stevens & Julie de Bergeyck (eds.), World Movement of Mothers Europe (MMMEurope)

http://www.familyplatform.eu/en/doc/319/FAMILYPLATFORM_OJ_VOL4.pdf

All four Volumes of the Online Journals are included in
Spotlights on Contemporary Family Life – Families in Europe Vol. 2

Linden Farrer, William Lay (eds.)

http://hdl.handle.net/2003/27708

3   List of participants

The consortium consisted of the following 12 organisations:
1   Technical University Dortmund (Co-ordinators)
2   State Institute for Family Research at the University of Bamberg
3   Family Research Centre, University of Jyväskylä
4   Austrian Institute for Family Studies, University of Vienna:
5   Demographic Research Institute, Budapest
6   Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon:
     Department of Sociology and Social research, University of Milan-Bicocca
7   Institute of International and Social Studies, Tallinn University
8   London School of Economics
9   Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union (COFACE), Brussels
10   Forum delle Associazioni Familiari, Italy
11   Mouvement Mondial des Mères Europe, Brussels

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Members of the Consortium
Loreen Beier, ifb - State Institute for Family Research at the University of Bamberg (Germany)
Zsuzsa Blaskó, DRI - Demographic Research Institute Budapest (Hungary)
Sonja Blum, ÖIF - Austrian Institute for Family Studies, University of Vienna (Austria)/ Institute of Political Science, University of Münster (Germany)
Francesco Belletti, FDAF - Forum delle Associazioni Familiari (Italy)
Julie de Bergeyck, MMM- Mouvement Mondial de Mères –Europe (Belgium)
Ranjana Das, LSE -London School of Economics and Political Science (United Kingdom)
Anne-Claire de Liedekerke, MMM - Mouvement Mondial de Mères Europe (Belgium)
Anna Dechant, ifb - State Institute for Family Research at the University of Bamberg (Germany)
Matthias Euteneuer, TUDO- Technical University Dortmund (Germany)
Linden Farrer, COFACE - Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union (Belgium)
Leeni Hansson, Institute for International and Social Studies, Tallinn University (Estonia)
Christian Haag, ifb - State Institute for Family Research at the University of Bamberg (Germany)
Veronika Herche, DRI - Demographic Research Institute (Hungary)
Dirk Hofaecker, ifb - State Institute for Family Research at the University of Bamberg/MZES – Mannheimer Zentrum für Europäische Sozialfoschung (Germany)
Kimmo Jokinen, JYU - Family Research Centre at the University of Jyväskylä (Finland)
Olaf Kapella, ÖIF - Austrian Institute for Familiy Studies, University of Vienna (Austria)
Teppo Kröger, Family Research Centre at the Universtiy of Jyväskylä (Finland)
Marjo Kuronen, JYU - Family Research Centre at the University of Jyväskylä (Finland)
William Lay, COFACE - Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union (Belgium)
Carmen Leccardi, University of Milano-Bicocca (Italy)
Mafalda Leitão, ICS - Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon (Portugal)
Sonia Livingstone, LSE - London School of Economics and Political Science (United Kingdom)
Sveva Magaraggia, University of Milan-Bicocca (Italy)
Elisa Marchese, ifb - State Institute of Family Research of the University of Bamberg (Germany)
Petra Marciniak, TUDO- Technical University Dortmund (Germany)
Dorota Pawlucka, TUDO- Technical University Dortmund (Germany)
Miriam Perego, University of Milano-Bicocca (Italy)

Marietta Pongracz, DRI - Demographic Research Institute (Hungary)
Lorenza Rebuzzini, FDAF - Forum delle Associazioni Familiari (Italy)
Epp Reiska, IISS - Institute of International and Social Studies, Tallinn University (Estonia)
Christiane Rille-Pfeifer, ÖIF - Austrian Institute for Family Studies, University of Vienna (Austria)
Vasco Ramos, ICS - Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon (Portugal)
Marina Rupp, ifb - State Institute of Family Research at the University of Bamberg (Germany)
Ellu Saar, IISS - Institute of International and Social Studies, Tallinn University (Estonia)
Kim-Patrick Sabla, TUDO - Technical University Dortmund/University Vechta (Germany)
Zsolt Spéder, DRI - Demographic Research Institute (Hungary)
Joan Stevens, MMM - Movement Mondial de Mères Europe (Belgium)
Uwe Uhlendorff, TUDO - Technical University Dortmund (Germany)
Karin Wall, ICS - Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon (Portugal)
Hayet Zeghiche, COFACE - Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union (Belgium)

Members of the advisory board:
Emanuela Tassa, European Commission - DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
Krzysztof Iszkowski, European Commission - DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
Nina Parra, BMFSFJ - German federal ministry of family affairs, senior citizens, women and youth (Germany)
Madeleine Wallin, Haro (Sweden)
Jonas Himmelstrand, Haro (Sweden)
Lydie Keprova, MoLSA - Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic (Czech Republic)
Katerina Cadyova, MoLSA - Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic (Czech Republic)
Gilles Seraphin, UNAF - Union Nationale des Associations Familiales (France)
Clem Henricson, UEA - University of East Anglia (United Kingdom)
Jean Kellerhals, UNIGE - University of Geneva (Switzerland)
Lea Pulkkinen, JYU University of Jyväskylä (Finland)

External experts:
Katherine Bird, Bundesforum Familie (Germany)
Pierre Calame, FPH - Fondation Charles Léopold Mayer (France)
Elie Faroult, former official of the European Commission, DG Research
Aila-Leena Matthies, JYU - University of Jyväskylä, Kokkola University Consortium Chydenius (Finland)
Barbara Stauber, University of Tuebingen (Germany)

Stakeholder representatives and other participants:
Hibah Aburwein, EFOMW - European Forum of Muslim Women (Belgium)
Silvan Agius, ILGA Europe - International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (Belgium)
Robert Anderson, EUROFOUND - European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
Claudine Attias-Donfut, CNAV - Caisse nationale d'assurance vieillesse (France)
Anneli Antonnen, Tampere University (Finland)
Maks Banens, MODYS - Université de Lyon (France)
Angelo Berbotto, NELFA - Network of European LGBT Families Associations (United Kingdom)
Tijne Berg-le Clercq, NJi - Netherlands Youth Institute (Netherlands)
Gabrielle Chabert, FEF - Forum Européen des Femmes (Belgium)
Anne Charlier-des Touches, FEFAF - Fédération Européenne des Femmes Actives au Foyer (Belgium)

Anna Maria Comito, COFACE–Handicap/Co.Fa.As.Clelia - Confederazioni di Organizzazione di Famiglie con persone disabili dell'Unione Europea (Italy)

Michela Costa, COFACE - Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union (Belgium)

Agata D'Addato, Eurochild (Belgium)

Baudouin de Lichtervelde, EDW - European Dignity Watch (Belgium)

Luk de Smet, Gezinsbond (Belgium)

Eric de Wasch, Gezinsbond (Belgium)

Lourdes del Fresno, Spanish Family Forum (Spain)

Marién Delgado, UNCEAR – Unión de Centros de Acción Rural (Spain)

Fred Deven, Kenniscentrum WVG – Kenniscentrum Welzijn, Volksgezondheid en Gezin (Belgium)

Shirley Dex, IoE - Institute of Education, University of London (United Kingdom)

Christiane Dienel, Nexus - Institute for Cooperation Management and Interdisciplinary Research (Germany)

Elena Dobre, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection (Romania)

Maria do Rosário Mckinney, FEF - Forum Européen des Femmes (Belgium)

Annemie Drieskens, Gezinsbond (Belgium)

Nathalie d'Ursel, NWFE - New Women for Europe (Belgium)

Karolina Elbanowska, Zwiazek Duzych Rodzin "Trzy Plus" (Poland)

Tomász Elbanowski, Parents Rights Association (Poland)

Rada Elenkova, BGRF - Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation (Bulgaria)

Daniel Erler, pme Familienservice GmbH (Germany)

Colette Fagan, University of Manchester (United Kingdom)

Jeanne Fagnani, CNRS - Centre national de la recherche scientifique (France)

Ada Garriga Cots, IFFD - International Federation for Family Development (Spain)

Judit Gazsi, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (Hungary)

Gabor Gerber, Semmelweis University Budapest (Hungary)

Zsuzsa Gerber, HWA - Hungarian Women's Alliance (Hungary)

Anne Girault, Femina Europa (France)

Margen Celene Gómez Vargas, European Large Families Confederation (Spain)

Marion Gret, NELFA - Network of European LGBT Families Associations (France)

Maria das Dores Guerreiro, ISCTE-IUL - Lisbon University Institute (Portugal)

Hana Haskova, SOU - Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (Czech Republic)

Marek Havrda, European Commission - DG SANCO (Belgium)

Brian Heaphy, University of Manchester (United Kingdom)

Marielle Helleputte, FEFAF - Fédération Européenne des Femmes Actives au Foyer (Belgium)

Joelle Hennemanne, FEF - Forum Européen des Femmes (Belgium)

Jaime Hernández, HO - HazteOir.org (Spain)

Helena Hiila, The Family Federation of Finland (Finland)

Maria Hildingsson, FAFCE - Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe (Belgium)

Sven Iversen, AGF - Arbeitsgemeinschaft der deutschen Familienorganisationen (AGF) e.V. (Germany)

Alexandra Jachanova-Dolezelova, EWL - European Women's Lobby (Czech Republic)

Jana Jamborová, NWFE - New Women for Europe (Belgium)

Lea Javornik Novak, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Republic of Slovenia)

Josef Jelinek, ONZ - Obcanske sdruzeni (Czech Republic)

Ghislaine Julemont, CAL - Centre d'Action Laïque (Belgium)

Karin Jurczyk, DJI - German Youth Institute (Germany)

Renata Kaczmarska, LSE - London School of Economics and Political Science (United Kingdom)

Teresa Kapela, Związek Dużych Rodzin ''Trzy Plus'' (Poland)

Jean Kellerhals, UNIGE - University of Genève (Switzerland)

Naureen Khan, NSPCC - National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (United Kingdom)

Magdalena Kocik, IPS - University of Warsaw (Poland)

Anna Kokko, The Family Federation of Finland (Finland)

Zsuzsa Kormosné Debreceni, NOE - National Association of Large Families (Hungary)

Martina Leibovici-Mühlberger, ARGE Erziehungsberatung (Germany)

Arnlaug Leira, UiO - University of Oslo (Norway)

Liliane Leroy, FPS - Femmes Prévoyants Socialists (Belgium)

Kathrin Linz, ISS - Institut für Sozialarbeit und Sozialpädagogik (Germany)

Marie-Liesse Mandula, MMM - Movement Mondial de Mères Europe (France)

Laszlo Marki, European Large Families Confederation (Hungary)

Claude Martin, EHESP - Ecole des hautes études en santé publique (France)

Michiel Matthes, Alliance for Childhood European Network Group (Belgium)

Françoise Meauzé, CNAFC - Confédération Nationale des Associations Familiales Catholiques (France)

Rommel Mendes-Leite, Université de Lyon (France)

Cascón Mercedes, The Family Watch (Spain)

Michael Meuser, TUDO - Technical University of Dortmund (Germany)

Anneli Miettinen, Population Research Institute, The Family Federation of Finland (Finland)

Roumjana Modeva, Women and Mothers against Violence (Bulgaria)

Daniel Molinuevo, Eurofound - European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Ireland)

Andreas Motel-Klingebiel, DZA - German Centre of Gerontology (Germany)

João Mouta, PFA - Parents Forever Association (Portugal)

Leonids Mucenieks, ULLFA - Union of Latvian Large Families Associations (Latvia)

Philip Muller, Spanish Family Forum (Spain)

Gordon Neufeld, UBC - University of British Columbia (Canada)

John Hebo Nielsen, Joint Council of Child Issues (Denmark)

Margaret O'Brien, UEA - University of East Anglia (United Kingdom)

James O'Brien, Westlink Consulting

Livia Oláh, Stockholm University (Sweden)

Ilona Ostner, Georg - August University Goettingen (Germany)

João Peixoto, ISEG - Instituto Superior de Economica e Gestão, Univerdisade Técnica de Lisboa (Portugal)

Heloísa Perista, CESIS - Centre for Studies for Social Intervention (Portugal)

Judith Peters, Mothers Union (Ireland)

Ann Phoenix, IoE - Institute of Education, University of London (United Kingdom)

Elisabeth Potzinger, KFÖ - Katholischer Familienverband Österreichs (Austria)

Ceridwen Roberts, University of Oxford (United Kingdom)

Yves Roland-Gosselin, COFACE - Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union (Belgium) / CNAFC - Confédération Nationale des Associations Familiales Catholiques (France)

Virginie Rothey, Femina Europa

Raul Sanchez, IESP - Institute of Advanced Family Studies, International University of Catalunya (Spain)

Verena Schmidt, ILO - International Labour Organisation (Hungary)

Alexander Schwentner, UNICEF Austria - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund Austria (Austria)

Cinzia Sechi, ETUC - European Trade Union Confederation (Belgium)

José A. Simões, UNL – New University of Lisbon (Portugal)

Jorma Sipilä, Tampere University (Finland)