

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Professor John Wilton

Lecture 1

**The growth in importance of
social policy in the E.U. project**

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U. Lecture 1

1. The founding principles and historical development of the E.U.- from an initial economic basis to the incorporation of social issues and policy
2. The role of social policy in E.U. development

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The European Coal and Steel Community
(ECSC) (1951)

The European Economic Community
(EEC) (1957)

The European Community (EC) (1967)

The European Union (EU) (1993)

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- Treaty of Rome (1957)
 - free movement of goods, capital
and labour
- Social Democrat West German
Chancellor Willy Brandt
- E.C. Summit at The Hague,
Netherlands, Dec.1969

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-1972 E.U. Summit meeting, Paris:

the Member states “attached as much importance to vigorous action in the social field as to achievement of economic union”

- Led to creation of European Regional Development Fund and reform of Structural Funds.

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1974 Social Action Programme

- the aim of which was “to draw up a coherent policy setting out the initial practical steps on the road towards the ultimate goal of European Social Union”.

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Changes in the early 1980s allowing for the revival of the E.U. integration project and social policy:

1. Abandonment of nationalistic (anti-EU integration) economic policies;
2. Growing acceptance of increased marketisation of society in EU
3. Success of European Commission, headed in 1985 by Jacques Delors

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Revival of European integration project
through 2 major documents:

1. 1985 White Paper on the completion of
the internal market;
2. 1986 Single European Act
 - ‘subsidiarity’
 - change in social policy strategy from
‘harmonisation’ to ‘mutual recognition’

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- Delors' 'strategy' – 'spillover'
- 1988 European Commission working paper 'The Social Dimension of the Internal Market'
 - proposed 'Social Charter'
 - plus, reform of Structural Funds (European Social Fund, Agricultural Fund, and European Regional Development Fund)

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- Social Charter put before E.C. Council of Ministers Summit meeting, Strasbourg, 8th and 9th December 1989 - agreed by 11 votes to 1 – but in ‘Non-Binding form’
- Social Charter became part of 1993 Maastricht Treaty of European Union
- Although its implementation began through 1989 Social Action Programme

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The Social Charter of the Maastricht Treaty on European Union, 1993

1. Introduction
2. Twelve areas of fundamental social rights for workers
 - (i) freedom of movement
 - (ii) employment and remuneration
 - (iii) improvements in living and working conditions
 - (iv) social protection
 - (v) freedom of association and collective bargaining
 - (vi) vocational training
 - (vii) equal treatment for men and women
 - (viii) rights to information, consultation and participation (in workplace)
 - (ix) health and safety
 - (x) protection of children and adolescents
 - (xi) protection of elderly persons
 - (xii) protection of disabled persons
3. The implementation of the Charter

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Reasons Social policy stronger and more prominent in E.U. by 1990s:

1. E.U. could no longer be ignored;
2. Internal E.U. institutional changes;
3. A supportive (on social policy) E.U. Commission + role of Jacques Delors
4. Development and growth of NGOs
5. Change in position of trade unions and 'leftist' political parties in E.U. states
6. Three new Member states in 1994 – Austria, Finland, Sweden – had social policy traditions

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“The social dimension permeates all our discussions and everything we do ... Think what a boost it would be for democracy and social justice if we could demonstrate that we are capable of working together to create a better integrated society open to all”

(Jacques Delors, October 1989)