
Book review

SIMONA MARIA STĂNESCU, SOCIAL PROTECTION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION – A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS, 2014, BUCHAREST: PRO UNIVERSITARIA

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Strengthening the social security system in the European Union is a top issue in the context of a post-crisis period which affected largely the Member States. From this perspective, from an essential idea to identify common points that can build a space of welfare at European level, the emergence of a work that analyzes in depth the differences between the founding states, old countries and new Member States is an original approach that is framed by changes vectors expected by Europeans citizens (Cace et al, 2011; Cace et al., 2012). Making a comparative analysis at European level represents a documentary and statistical incursion which involve perseverance in to capture aspects and details that can offer appropriate solutions for modern systems of social protection at European level.

The book '**Social Protection in the European Union – A Comparative Analysis**', published in Bucharest (ProUniversitaria, 2015, 198 pp.), is authored by Simona Maria Stănescu – researcher and doctor in sociology which gives a rigorous and systematic methodological framework by the expertise she has acquired within the Research Institute for Quality of Life, and by her coordination and implementation of many projects. Furthermore, the vector paper is still highlighted in the introduction by the author, by mentioning the continuity of treating specific aspects of social protection: 'Continuous improvement of social protection coordination within the European Union (EU) towards providing a decent quality of life for all is supported by monitoring the national performances of the member-states alongside adjustments brought to the negotiation process with candidate countries' (p. 15).

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The structure is organized into four parts through which the progressive approach of the European framework structured until to EU accession of Croatia: the first part addresses the process during relatively recent accession countries of the fifth wave to the European Union, indicating the significant benchmarks in the history of the past two decades, the route plan assimilating the *acquis communautaire* to become a member state, but also in the sphere of institutional harmonization so necessary in the social field.

In the second paper - *Answers of European Union to Demographic Challenges*, is highlight the qualities of authentic researcher of the author through very detailed population dynamics in terms of changes in the last 60 years at European level, treating themselves in distinct special issues of liberalization of abortion and marital status. A continuity and deepening of the theme is surprised by treating the subject in Part III of *Social Protection of Family*, made legitimately by bringing in the forefront of European debate to the family as a pillar of society regarding social protection in modern societies (Nicolaescu, 2010). In the last part of the paper, *Anti Poverty Measures analysis* is focused on the treatment of themes regarding Unemployment benefit and Minimum Income Guaranteed Schemes.

The volume is characterized by at least three important coordinates:

- a. first, the author brings to the forefront the debate on dynamic analysis of progress at the socio-economic level regarding the countries who accessing successively to the European Union; the line of comparisons in this paper provides a framework for fundamental reflection to reposition of supportive policies of the European Union to the Member suffering of specific gaps in social protection.
- b. a significant and distinctive dimension of the paper refers to the chronological approach to the themes of the presented sections, showing a historically knowledge transfer that recalls the vision of the reader to follow the route of social development of Member States, to integrate both innovation in information flows and necessary changes in social protection reform.
- c. a special distinction in terms of the work refers to the magnitude, complexity and accuracy of statistical data and documentary sources used by the author, the path innovative treatment and convergence parts of the work, as well as segmentation and detailing particular aspects of the system social protection implemented by European Union member states; synthesizer effort present in this work derives from extremely varied instrumentation information, and the ability to sort and present the findings of comparative, offering an example of capitalizing on existing data at European level in the social field.

The volume published at ProUniversitaria (Collection Psychosocial Sciences, coordinators Mihaela Tomita and Maria Simona Stanescu) is a reference work addressed both to researchers, to specialists in social sphere and decision makers in the sphere of administrative and political areas given the complexity and multitude of issues addressed. Also, by itself profile compared the book represents an excellent material for reflection at European level, an aspect mentioned in the end of the volume: 'The commitment of European Union member-states towards accomplishing the commonly agreed goals (1997 European Employment Strategy, 2000 Lisbon Strategy and Europa 2020) is supported by a continuous assessment of social policy tendencies' (p. 160).

References

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