Challenges for Europe : sustainable care services and social protection

Béatrice Romet, *Pour la Solidarité*

Leeds, 9 July 2010

European Think tank Pour la Solidarité
www.pourlasolidarite.eu / info@pourlasolidarite.eu

European policies in the field of care services

First appearance :

- In the backdrop of the White Paper of Jacques Delors,1993

→ Development of "local services"

→ A double objective :

- The creation of employment in a sector with a rather important potential
- The development of "collective mechanisms of solidarity"

<u>But</u> : negative image of these services and important cost.

- A notable place in the first European Employment Strategy (EES), 1997

→ Combating unemployment throughout "the creation of more and better jobs for the European citizens".

→ Strengthening the local dynamics, which offer new opportunities of jobs and can respond to new needs.

→ In particular, promotion of new jobs in services for households, throughout voluntarist policies.

- A more integrated approach in the Lisbon Strategies I and II, 2000 and 2005

→ Making the European Union (EU) the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, […] capable of sustainable economic growth […] and greater social cohesion".

→ 3 main issues for the development of care services :

- Fight against unemployment and active inclusion
- Health and prevention
- Pensions

- The Europe 2020 Strategy :

→ the EU aims to ensure that the labour market is ready to meet **future economic challenges**, such as those faced by the health and services sector.

- In the last decade, the EU has developed a **social inclusion** policy :

→ Since 2000 : Social Open Method of Coordination

→ 2007 : Communication from the Commission "Modernising social protection for greater social justice and economic cohesion : taking forward the active inclusion of people furthest from the labour market"

→ 2010 : Europe 2020 Strategy with a prority on inclusive growth, i.e. a high-employment economy delivering economic, social and territorial cohesion.

→ The development of a European social policy has contributed to the expansion of the personal care services.

Long-term care in Europe

- The EU promotes the coordination of national long-term care policies through the **open method of coordination** with a particular focus on access, quality and sustainability

→ **Access** : enhancing the provision of long term care services (a mix of home, community and institutional services) ; shorter waiting times ; affordable care for everybody ; reducing geographical differences...

→ **Quality** : priority for tailor-made home and community care services ; better coordination with medical, nursing, social and palliative care...

→ **Sustainability** : improved coordination between different levels of government budgets and between health and social care budgets ; sustainable mix of public and private sources of finance ; emphasis on health promotion at all ages including old age, disease prevention and rehabilitation policies ; ensure sufficient human resources...

Reasons for coordinating long-term care at EU level

→ **Demographic challenges** : ageing population with increasing rates of dependency and disability rates

→ **Economic challenges** :

- fight against unemployment and the shortage of labour in this sector ;

- creation of jobs for low-qualified people ;

- reconciliation of private and professional life ;

- creation of new skills for new jobs ;

- quality of jobs ;

→ **Social and health challenges** :

- need to promote labour market inclusion in order to prevent health risks ;
- need to provide citizens with a high level of protection from the risk of illness and dependence ;
- delivering long-term care services of good quality for all those that need them ;
- need to move towards integrated care, where social and health care needs are packaged as seamlessly as possible for each patient : an efficient way to deliver preventative measures while coping with needs of an ageing population.

- The crisis and lower growth prospects are likely to impact on all types of pension schemes and aggravate the ageing challenge.

→ **Challenges for care systems** :

- spending on long-term care is expected to grow fast in view of population ageing.

- At the same time, increasing demand coupled with severe budget pressure gives new urgency to the efficiency of care systems. The challenge is to improve efficiency while ensuring access for all to quality care services.