



## Social Protection Discussion Paper Series

# **Toward a Reformed and Coordinated Pension System in Europe: Rationale and Potential Structure**

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# **Toward a Reformed and Coordinated Pension System in Europe: Rationale and Potential Structure\***

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## **Abstract**

The need for a rapid and comprehensive reform of the pension systems in most current and future member countries of the European Union is increasingly acknowledged by individuals and politicians. National efforts can now draw support on intensified EU cooperation which is based on the Open Method for Coordination. Yet, this method takes the diversity of European pension design as a given, and much of the reform debate is still limited to fiscal issues at national levels. This paper (i) reviews the reform needs of the pension systems for fiscal, economic and social reasons; (ii) makes the case for a move toward a more coordinated pension system in Europe; and (iii) sketches how such a system may look like and come about. The central claim of the paper is that a multi-pillar system, with a non-financial (or notional) defined contribution (NDC) system at its core, and coordinated supplementary funded pensions and social pensions at its wings is an ideal approach to deal with diverse fiscal and social reform needs. The approach would also introduce a harmonized structure while allowing for country-specific preferences with regard to coverage and contribution rate. Such a reform approach may lead to a Pan-European reform movement as a number of countries did or plan to introduce NDCs, and others may easily convert their point system into an NDC structure.

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## **1. Introduction**

The need for a rapid and comprehensive reform of the pension systems in most current and future member countries of the European Union is increasingly acknowledged by individuals and politicians. While a few countries have recently undertaken major reforms to make their pension systems financially sustainable, in the majority of European countries the reform efforts are still insufficient. While national efforts can now draw support on intensified EU cooperation based on the Open Method for Coordination, this method takes the diversity of European pension design as a given, and much of the reform debate is still limited to fiscal issues at national levels. There is little discussion about a reform need beyond fiscal consideration. There is no discussion (anymore) about a reform move toward a more coordinated pension system within the European Union, and how such a system may look and come about. That is the topic of this paper and to this end it progresses in three sections. Section 2 reviews the reform needs of the pension systems for fiscal, social and economic reasons. Section 3 makes the case for a move toward a more coordinated pension system in Europe. And Section 4 sketches how such a system may look like and come about. The central claim of the paper is that a multi-pillar system, with a non-financial (or notional) defined contribution (NDC) system at its core, and coordinated supplementary funded pensions and social pensions at its wings is an ideal approach to deal with diverse fiscal, social and economic reform needs. The approach would also introduce a harmonized structure while allowing for country-specific preferences with regard to coverage and contribution rate. Such a reform approach may lead to a Pan-European reform movement as a number of countries did or plan to introduce NDCs, and others may easily convert their point system into an NDC structure.

## **2. The need for pension reform in EU and EUA countries<sup>1</sup>**

There are three main reasons why countries of the European Union (EU) and the future accession countries in Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe (EUA) need rapid and comprehensive reforms of their national pension systems:<sup>2</sup> First, the current high

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<sup>1</sup> This and the next section draw partly on Holzmann, MacKellar and Rutkowski et al. (2003).

<sup>2</sup> For a similar list of non-demographic arguments for pension reform, see Bovenberg (2003).

expenditure level and related budgetary pressure will only worsen given the projected further aging of populations, and the national systems need to be reformed to handle aging in a manner consistent with individual preferences and macroeconomic constraints. Second, ongoing socio-economic changes are rendering current retirement income provisions inadequate at the social and economic level. Third, globalization creates opportunities and challenges, and to deal with them effectively requires, inter alia, flexibility and better functioning factor markets.

The *expenditure level for public pensions* in most Western European countries is well above that of other highly industrial countries at a similar income level. The average pension expenditure as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) for the 15 EU countries in 2000 amounted to 10.4 percent (this is a low estimate because it includes only the expenditure under the projection exercise of the Economic Policy Committee, 2001). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimate is about 1.3 percentage points higher (OECD 2002). The average for the non-European and affluent OECD countries—the United States, Japan, Canada, the Republic of Korea, Australia and New Zealand—in 2000 was about 5.3 percent, that is, roughly half. In the EU, only Ireland (4.6 percent) and the UK (5.5 percent) have similar levels. This difference is also shared by the accession countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Except Romania (5.1 percent), all others have expenditure shares close to (and in Croatia, Slovenia, and Poland, well above) the EU average and hence much higher than non-European OECD countries despite an income level of one-quarter and less. Poland's pension expenditure, at close to 15 percent of GDP, rivals that of Austria and Italy for the world championship (see figure 1 in the annex). The gap between these expenditure levels and those in non-European OECD countries is only partially explained by differences in population age structure. Rather, it reflects differences in the public/private mix of provisions and in the benefit levels and the effective retirement age in the public systems. The replacement rate is generally much higher as public (largely unfunded) pensions are little supplemented by private and funded arrangements (except in Denmark, the Netherlands, Ireland, and the United Kingdom). The effective retirement age is typically low as a result of disincentives to work longer in current schemes, special options for early retirement, and past labor market policy that deliberately attempted to keep the unemployment rate low by allowing older workers to exit prematurely.

Yet, the demographic component in pension expenditure is going to increase under unreformed systems as aging in Europe accelerates.

In Europe, the total fertility rate has been below replacement level (approximately 2.1) since the 1970s in the West and since the 1980s in the East, and there are few signs of a rebound from the current low levels. On the other hand, life expectancy is likely to increase during the next 50 years by 4.2 years for women and 5 years for men. As a result, for the EU15, the old-age dependency ratio is projected to increase from 27.7 percent (2000) to 53.4 percent (by 2050) (see table 1 in the annex), based on rather optimistic assumptions with regard to total fertility rate (assumed to rise again to 1.8 in most countries) and life-expectancy (assumed to rise less than in the past). The projections for the EU Accession countries are very similar (United Nations 2002); actually the projected pace of aging in EUA is faster. Based on this projected change in the old-age dependency ratio in the East and the West, and in a no-reform scenario, expenditure would roughly double.

Of course, such a radical expenditure increase would not necessarily materialize because some reform measures have already been enacted, and system dependency ratios (beneficiaries to contributors) may not deteriorate to the same extent as old-age dependency ratios. Greater labor force participation by women is likely and that of the elderly may increase as well. This, at least, is the scenario put forth by the Economic Policy Committee of the EU, and the country projections for the period 2000 to 2050 (EPC 2001; see annex table 2).<sup>3</sup> As a result, the average EU pension expenditure (captured under this exercise) is projected to increase “only” from 10.4 percent of GDP in 2000 to a peak of 13.6 percent around 2040 (with a projected fall from 5.5 to 4.4 percent for the United Kingdom, but almost a doubling for Spain from 12.6 to 24.8 percent). This moderate projected 30 percent increase of the average expenditure level (compared with a pure demographically induced increase of some 70 percent) is estimated as a result of lower benefit ratios (average benefits compared to GDP per capita) and higher employment ratios (employment to population aged 15 to 64). However, I strongly make the conjecture that this modest increase in EU average pension expenditure levels will require major changes in the pension schemes

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<sup>3</sup> Other projections by academics and national research institutes are typically less optimistic and predict a much larger increase in expenditure under current service scenarios. See, for example, Rother et al. (2003).

and their incentives for enhanced labor market participation and delayed retirement decisions. Put differently, a further major increase in pension expenditure can only be prevented if major reforms take place.

No similar and coordinated projection exercise has been undertaken for the EU Accession countries but existing projections clearly paint a two-class picture (EPC 2003): In countries which have undertaken major reforms—such as Hungary and Poland—the expenditure share remains largely unchanged (and a similar path can be conjectured for reformed systems in Estonia and Latvia). In countries where a major reform is still outstanding, the expenditure share in percent of GDP is projected to increase dramatically: An almost doubling in Cyprus and Czech Republic, and a further increase from high level in Slovenia. Bank internal projections are largely consistent with this picture.

Even if the budgetary and demographically induced pressures did not exist, there still would be a major need for most European countries to reform their pension systems to be better aligned with the **socioeconomic changes**. Three changes stand out: increasing female labor force participation; high divorce rates and changing family structures; and the rise in atypical employment. Furthermore, rising life expectancy and other changes also call for a rethinking of the design of disability benefits.

In the EU countries, the *labor force participation* of women has increased substantially over recent decades. In the former centrally planned countries, it was very high, but it decreased during the transition to a market economy (annex table 3), and the decrease for women mimics that of men and was in some countries even less pronounced (World Bank, 2003). Although there are differences among EU countries (for example, in Italy, female labor force participation in the age group 15-64 in 2000 stood at a low 46 percent, in contrast to Denmark where a 77 percent female participation rate is close to that of men), a further increase is projected for all countries. The EU average for the age group 15-54 is projected to increase from 63 to 76 percent, whereas that for men will remain largely constant at around 85 percent. So far this change in female labor force participation is little reflected in the pension benefit structure (see annex table 5). The benefit rules still largely reflect the traditional image of a working husband and a child-caring housewife who needs a widow's pension for her protection in old age. Only a few countries, such as

Denmark, have fully moved towards independent pension rights and eliminated the traditional widows pension (Denmark in 1984). As a result there is often under-provisioning for young widows with children, and over-provisioning for widows with own pensions—the latter of which now includes widowers. To ensure gender neutrality, survivor's pensions in many countries have been extended to male spouses and the budgetary consequences are increasingly attempted to be curtailed by ceilings and tapers.

Furthermore, eligibility for survivor's pensions is complicated by the *rising divorce rate*. In many countries the divorce rates are more than 50 percent of the rates of marriage (per 1000 inhabitants; see annex table 4). This approximation means that in many countries more than 50 percent of marriages will not survive, including second or third marriages. And those countries with a more conservative divorce behavior, such as Italy and Ireland, are expected to catch-up quickly. But only a few countries have moved in the direction of establishing independent rights for spouses (and even less for partners), that is, the individualization of pension rights. In many countries benefit traps for women still exist, that is, incentives against rejoining the labor market or remarrying when eligibility for a survivor's pension has been achieved.

Another and more recent development concerns the rise in *atypical employment*, that is, the reduction in full-time salaried employment and the increase in part-time employment, pseudo self-employment, and temporary employment (see table 6 in the annex). This development may be ascribed to globalization and competitive pressure that makes full-time employment less dominant than it used to be; it may be linked to more self-selected flexibility in the labor market (including the choice of retirement provisions). Data for OECD countries suggests that coverage under public pension schemes is decreasing (Holzmann 2003). Whatever the reason, these atypically employed people do not fare well under some pension schemes, which are based on the full-time employment fiction. In many current systems do atypically employed fare extremely well which limits their incentives to contribute on a continued basis. Again, reforms (and a stricter contribution-benefit relationships) are called for.

Socioeconomic changes also call for a *review and re-design of disability benefits*, including the de-linking of design, delivery and financing of old-age benefits. At the start of the Bismarckian-type pension scheme, disability benefits were much more

important for individuals than old-age benefits as only one in six workers could expect to reach the advanced retirement age of 70. Old-age pensions then can be conceptualized as generalized or categorical disability pensions, i.e. insuring much the same risk. Nowadays an old-age pension is a life-annuity paid with accumulated funds or acquired rights and assures against the uncertainty of death. Conceptually, it is totally de-linked from a disability pension which insures against income loss due to worker's incapacity. But the original design of disability pensions and the close link to old-age pensions still prevails in much of the European pension systems, and the mixed design has also helped the use of disability pensions as a form of unemployment benefits in many countries. Furthermore, sport and car accidents instead of general incapacity have become a major reason for the granting of disability benefits, in particular at younger ages. As a final argument, disability benefits—insurance-based and means-tested—need to be reviewed and integrated into the design of an overall work/benefit package for disabled (OECD, 2003).

Last but not least, *globalization* understood as high and increasing integration of markets for goods and services, factors of production, and knowledge calls for changes in the way public programs operate, including in the area of pension provision. Such reforms are needed not only to reap the benefits of globalization but also to deal with the challenges which include profound shocks resulting from technical innovations, and shifts in the demand and supply of goods and factors. This calls, inter alia, for more flexibility across labor markets, improved financial markets, and life long learning.

A main conjecture about the fate of nations and their economic performance in a globalized world is their capacity to deal with shocks, in particular those which require the existing economic structure to adjust. It is claimed that the more flexible and adjustable an economy is to react to such shocks, the better it will fare. Such *flexibility* comprises mobility of individuals across professions, including between the public and the private sector. In most European countries, such mobility is hampered by separate pension schemes between both sectors which limit if not eliminate any move between them. If this argument is not convincing, separate schemes render the application of some reform measures difficult or counterproductive. For example, increasing the retirement age for all primary school teachers to, say 67, may not be in



the best interest of all participants, but it is feasible if a teacher can move easily to a related or different profession.

The integration of countries into the world economy is importantly linked with their own *financial sector development*. A developed domestic financial market is a main ingredient for full capital account convertibility, including the capacity to diversify pension assets internationally (Karacadag et al., 2003). International diversification is, perhaps, the only free lunch in the world, and promises major welfare effects as national and international rates of return of retirement assets (beyond shares) are little correlated. This requires, however, that some minimum domestic financial market exists. Forcing individuals to hold most or all of their pension assets in illiquid Pay-As-You-Go (PAYG) assets is not an optimal strategy for dealing with diverse risks individuals are exposed to and is clearly not welfare enhancing. Pension reforms which include the introduction or strengthening of a funded pillar allow such a risk diversification and at the same time can importantly contribute to development of the domestic financial market. Well developed domestic financial markets are a critical pillar of a market-based economy as they mobilize intermediate savings, allocate and price risk, absorb external financial shocks, and foster good governance through market-based incentives. The level of financial market development is positively linked to output level and quite likely also to economic growth paths (Beck et al., 2000, Levine 2003). Such effects are crucial for the EU Accession countries but are likely to be important for various current EU member states as well.

Last but not least, in order to handle aging through prolonged labor market participation, to provide labor market flexibility in a socially acceptable manner, and to contribute to knowledge and skill formation as a major ingredient for economic growth, a pension system which supports *life long learning* is required. Too many pension schemes today are still based on the strict separation of education, work, and retirement leisure. But a modern economy and the need for lifelong learning require a pension scheme in which the mixing of the three activities is encouraged and not impeded—for example, going back to school after years of work, bringing forward (retirement) leisure, or taking up work again after retirement (say, from ages 70 to 72). Such flexibility is discouraged in most current pension schemes.

To deal with aging, socio-economic changes and globalization, a reform approach is required which moves toward a more actuarial system structure that better links contributions and benefits, more individualization to handle professional and family mobility, and also some funding to allow more individual decision and choices. The approach must go beyond a parametric adjustment of existing schemes. For most EU member countries, this contrasts with the adopted reform approach so far, while EUA countries have shown more inclination to adopt a paradigmatic shift in pension provision (Holzmann, MacKellar and Rutkowski, 2003), yet with stronger differentiation in system design when compared to Latin America (Mueller, 2003).

*Reforms in the 1990s and early 2000s* in the EU countries were essentially of a parametric nature—with Sweden and partly Italy as the main exceptions. The reform package typically included a combination of the following elements: (i) reduction or elimination of early retirement provisions; (ii) an increase in the retirement age or related indirect measures to this effect; (iii) reduction in the annual accrual factor; (iv) further changes in indexation; (v) and introduction or enhanced support of a funded voluntary pillar. Only a few countries started towards more harmonized national systems (for example, Austria and partially France), and most countries ignored the non-fiscal reform needs except, perhaps, for reasons of political economy (Natali and Rodes, 2003). While essentially all these reforms move in the right direction, even from a fiscal point of view more is needed and rapidly.<sup>4</sup>

### **3. The need for a better coordinated pension system in an integrated Europe**

While there is increasing support for national pension reforms in EU and EUA countries, and despite agreement with some or, perhaps, all of the arguments advanced above, there is little understanding of and support for a Pan-European approach which should lead to a coordinated pension structure. Pension systems are

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<sup>4</sup> In order to deal with the fiscal issues resulting from aging, various recent reforms propose adjustments in annual pension indexation. For example the recent Rürup Commission Report for Germany suggests adjusting pensions in line with the shifts in the ratio of contributors to retirees, and the recent Austrian reform envisages to cap indexation by the amount the median voter receives. Balancing the fiscal accounts with reduced indexation instead of a lower initial pensions and price indexation thereafter is questionable for 3 main reasons: First, it introduces a high level of uncertainty for individuals as the future real pension level cannot be determined, but once it is known the capacity to react may be nil. Second, in view of the unsettled issue of financing long-term care for elderly, the financial needs of elderly may increase but not be reduced. Last but not least, the reform is not credible as politicians may not be able to withstand future pressures for changes in indexation.

considered—like other parts of social policy programs—as a national agenda item with little indication that member countries see a necessity for more coordination, and even less harmonization. And astonishingly, neither does the Commission of the European Union which in many other areas often sees the need for such a coordination, or even harmonization and pushes accordingly. “Open coordination” of a member country’s reform efforts as a benchmarking not a harmonization device is the name of the game (Holzmann, MacKellar and Rutkowski, 2003).

This section argues that a major impetus for a Pan-European pension reform approach resides in *European economic integration*, and the objective of common markets for goods, services and factors of production under a common currency—the euro. This objective has implications for the provision of retirement income: budgetary implications, the need for more labor market flexibility, and the need for enhanced labor supply in an aging population.

The concept of a stable common currency in Europe is linked with the *Maastricht fiscal criteria* to keep the fiscal deficit below 3 percent and public debt below 60 percent of GDP. Although the selection of the criteria may be questioned (Holzmann, Hervé, and Demmel 1996), the objective is sound: to avoid excessive and opportunistic fiscal expansion by some member countries at the detriment of the internal and external value of the euro. To comply with the related growth and stability pact, the 12 “euroland” members engage to achieve a structural budget deficit of zero percent (to allow for fiscal expansion when cyclically needed). But many countries will not be able to achieve a zero budget deficit in a sustainable manner unless the pension system is reformed and the explicit or implicit transfers from the budget are curtailed. In Austria, as an extreme example, the pension-related deficit amounts to almost 5 percent of GDP. And all current and future member countries are exposed to enhanced fiscal pressure of population aging in the main public programs—pensions and health—in addition to the not yet fully grasped expenditure pressure in long-term care programs or infrastructure.

Room for budgetary expansion (and contraction) is needed in a common currency area because exchange rate and interest rate policy are lost and few other instruments are available to deal with asymmetric shocks hitting some member states and not others. Given the limited effectiveness of fiscal policy in an integrated economic area

resulting from high leakages to other regions or compensating private sector savings, the other main policy instrument has to come into play: *labor market flexibility* through wage flexibility and migration.

Empirical evidence for the United States suggests that although wage adjustment during regional crises is important, the main adjustment mechanism is migration from (temporarily) contracting to expanding regions (Blanchard and Katz, 1992). This contrasted in the past with the European experience in which both wage flexibility and migration had little importance (Decressin and Fatàs, 1993); actually the international and inter-regional mobility in Europe during recent decades has been very low (Braunerhjelm et al. 2000). For Europe both adjustment mechanisms are likely to remain less important than in the United States because of more rigid labor markets, and cultural and linguistic barriers; the last two restrictions also translate into a larger loss of social capital when moving (Esping-Andersen, 2001). But both mechanisms need to be strengthened if delayed adjustments after demand or supply shocks, and its economic and social consequences are to be avoided.

A particular recent drastic example of the consequences of delayed structural adjustment and lack of mobility in resource re-allocation under a common currency-type arrangement is Argentina. The introduction of the currency board with the national currency pegged to the US dollar was motivated by many episodes of hyperinflation and the expectation that the tight monetary corset will help to push through reforms in the good and factor markets. But these reforms (including reforms in the labor market) did not come through as expected and left the country very vulnerable when shocks hit the world economy and neighboring countries.

One important mechanism to support a common currency and adjustments after shocks is a pension system that allows for full labor mobility across professions and states—a requirement that has not yet been met. In many European countries, different pension rules for public and private sector workers impede mobility between the sectors. Mobility between states exists notionally for public schemes (less in reality), but full portability for corporate and voluntary funded systems is still in the making. As a result, the EU does not have a coordinated, and even less of a harmonized pension system, which characterizes other economically integrated areas under a common currency (such as Australia, Brazil, Canada, Switzerland and the

United States). These federations or confederations exhibit many differences at state or provincial levels (including income taxes or short-term social benefits), but they have one thing in common—a public retirement income scheme across states.

A third main argument for a more coordinated Pan-European pension system resides in the need for more *labor market integration* which goes beyond the requested labor market flexibility. A strand of international economics suggests that free trade in goods and services or alternatively free capital flows may be sufficient to lead to equalized factor prices and maximize welfare. However, in the real world of externalities and imperfect competition, quite likely the performance of all markets (including the labor market) needs to be improved and integrated more strongly to maximize welfare (Nicoletti et al., 2001). Full integration of the European labor market requires full portability of pension rights between countries.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, the long-term *external value of the euro* is likely to be determined or at least co-determined by the growth expectation of Europe (compared with the United States or other currency areas). Current-period balances or imbalances in flows of goods and services or even the net-asset positions of countries are increasingly conjectured to lose their importance in determining the relative price of a currency under globalization. Productivity growth can only compensate partially for the effects on GDP growth of projected population decline in the EU15 (13 percent between 2000 and 2050 compared to an expected increase in the US of 50 percent or more), and higher productivity requires mechanisms to reallocate workers from shrinking to expanding sectors and regions. If falling population and aging are not better compensated for through increased labor supply resulting from higher labor market participation, delayed retirement, and increased external migration, the impact on GDP growth will be substantial. The weakness of the euro till recently (compared with the U.S. dollar) may be explained by expectations of the financial markets about the relative growth of these two currency areas. Enhanced labor force participation and delayed retirement, however, require major changes in age management practices in work places and labor markets as well as appropriately reformed retirement income schemes.

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<sup>5</sup> On the recent debate about the need to harmonize or not to harmonize labor market policies in Euro countries, see Calmfors (1998).

Clearly, while a pan-European pension system would help improve labor mobility, in and by itself, it is not sufficient. It would help as it reduces the transaction costs for people wanting to move between member states. These costs can be very high and in consequence, mobility very low as suggested by migration research. But un-coordinated pension systems are not the only source of transaction costs: There are other national social programs which need to be adjusted in order to enhance mobility, most importantly the health care financing, and here in particular the private/supplementary ones. And there are non-monetary costs as a result of culture and language barriers. The latter will be gradually reduced as younger people and the more educated population are increasingly more proficient in other European languages or use English as lingua franca. Open borders with more travel, more inter-European marriages, and the emergence of a European identity will also reduce actual or perceived cultural barriers. And the adjustment of other social programs, in particular health financing, will have to take place for its own sake (as in pensions) and will receive a Pan-European dimension due to the emergence of Pan-European providers and insurance mechanisms.

#### **4. Potential Structure of Pan-European pension system and transition issues**

What structure could or should a more coordinated Pan-European pension system have? And if an appropriate steady-state system were to emerge from the discussion, what are the transition issues the approach would encounter? And how could they be solved? This Section suggests answers to these questions while issues of the political economy and how to get there will be addressed in the concluding remarks in the last Section. This Section starts out by outlining the general and specific main objectives a Pan-European pension system should have before reviewing which of the main three options fits best. The proposed Pan-European system consists of a mandatory first pillar NDC plan, a (voluntary) funded pillar with occupational and individual retirement plans, and a basic (or zero) pillar of social or non-contributory pensions providing minimum income support for the very vulnerable elderly. All elements are discussed in turn with main emphasis on the NDC pillar. The proposed structure has highly attractive features against a Pan-European objective but is also suggested to be an extremely powerful reform option for the many ailing pension schemes in Europe, and beyond.

### **a. Demands on a reformed and coordinated Pan-European pension system**

What are the objectives that such a reformed system should fulfill? A presentation of these desiderata should allow for a transparent and objective discussion and an easy comparison with alternative reform proposals. Two sets of objectives are suggested: generic objectives which all modern pension systems worldwide should fulfill, and specific objectives which result from the EU background.

The *generic objectives* are the ones developed and proposed by the World Bank in a forthcoming policy paper, and two levels of goals—primary and secondary—are distinguished (Holzmann et al. 2004).

The primary goal of a pension system should be to provide adequate, affordable, sustainable, and robust old-age income, while seeking to implement welfare optimizing schemes in a manner appropriate to the individual country:

- An adequate system is one which provides benefits to the full breadth of the population that are sufficient to prevent old age poverty on a country specific absolute level in addition to providing a reliable means to smooth lifetime consumption for the vast majority of the population.
- An affordable system is one that is within the financing capacity of individuals and the society, one that will not displace other social or economic imperatives or lead to untenable fiscal consequences.
- Sustainable refers to the financial soundness of a pension system and its capacity to be maintained over a foreseeable horizon under a broad set of reasonable assumptions.
- Robust refers to the capacity to withstand major shocks, including those coming from economic, demographic and political risks.

The secondary goal of mandated pension provisions (and their reform) is to create positive output effects by minimizing negative impacts such as on labor markets while leveraging positive impacts such as on financial market development. This secondary goal is important since all retirement incomes—whether funded or un-funded—are essentially financed out of the country's output. The centrality of output for pension systems (Barr 2000) for delivering on the primary goals makes it imperative that the design and implementation of pension systems are checked for their economic output level and growth effects.

The suggested specific objectives of a Pan-European pension system, to be used as criteria for selection and choice, are: mobility, national preferences, solidarity, and feasible transition.

- First, the system should allow for easy or best unrestricted mobility between professions, sectors, and regions and also between stages of the life cycle (school, work, and leisure) and family structures.
- Second, the system should be consistent with the (European) concept of solidarity, understood as a mechanism of risk sharing among and between generations, redistribution of income from the life-time rich to life-time poor, and open risk coverage.
- Third, the system should allow for national preferences of target levels of (mandated) benefits or contributions, re-distributive allocation of resources toward the poor or specific groups or activities.
- Finally, the proposed future system should involve a feasible system transition from the current national systems for the largest possible number of member countries.

#### **b. Potential structures of a Pan-European pension system**

There are three main options for a future Pan-European pension system which aims to fulfill the objectives set-out above: (i) A basic pension plus a mandated fully-funded pillar; (ii) Bismarck for all; and (iii) basic or non-contributory pillar plus NDC pillar plus voluntary funded pillar. The main arguments are the following:

(i) A basic pension in the form of demogrant or means-tested social pension plus a mandated fully-funded pillar providing DC benefits would be consistent with all objectives, except most importantly the one on easy transition. According to the World Bank experience, such a system may be structured in such a way to target all primary and secondary goals, and if well done it may achieve these goals pretty well. Such a system can ensure the requested mobility, allow for national preferences (for example by country-specific levels of basic pensions and contribution rates for the funded pillar), and can be structured to ensure solidarity: for example, through a central public pension fund which pays one rate of return (hence pooling of risks across individuals) and through explicit budget transfers to individual accounts to deal with low income or periods of unemployment (as in Mexico). A main obstacle is (easy) transition. Abstracting from political problems to find consensus for such an Anglo-Saxon approach in Continental Europe, the main obstacle is fiscal. It is well known that such an approach makes the implicit debt which pension promises constitute explicit, and the level of this implicit debt is in the range of 200-300 percent



for most European countries.<sup>6</sup> Repayment of such an amount is beyond political and economic reach, and for a broad range of assumptions not Pareto-improving. While a repayment of the debt may not be necessary to achieve the social policy objectives, it can be doubted that international markets are willing to live with such an explicit debt level of the EU without consequences for interest rate and exchange rate of the Euro.

(ii) Under the second option, a future pension system would expand the dominant Bismarckian approach of an unfunded and publicly managed DB system to the whole EU. Supported by social pensions and voluntary funded pensions such an approach can also achieve many but not all objectives. Well structured, it can achieve all the primary goals, and very well structured it may even support the secondary goals of a pension scheme. But as experience with such systems throughout the world indicates, it will be difficult to make such structural reforms happen (and agreed at European level). With regard to the specific EU objectives, an inconsistency between the mobility goal and national preferences emerges. For example with different accrual rates or additions for, say, child caring under another identical DB structure, it would be difficult but not totally impossible to move from one profession or member country to the next, but the administrative efforts to emulate such a mobility would be gigantic while not fully successful. Last but not least, the transition would first require a consensus on a DB structure (and there are many), and a second consensus on complicated rules of transitions.

(iii) The proposed structure of a (mandated) first pillar NDC plan, a (voluntary) funded pillar with occupational and individual retirement plans, and a basic pillar of social/ non-contributory pensions which provides minimum income support for the very vulnerable elderly is claimed to fulfill all objectives—generic and specific, primary and secondary.<sup>7</sup> Of course, there is room for design and implementation specificities to make a future structure very well or less well fit. The following subsections outline the basic structures and design elements to make it fit well.

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<sup>6</sup> There are various estimates for the implicit debt of European pension systems (see Holzmann et al. 2001), but a simple rule of thumb may be sufficient according to which the level of implicit debt is roughly 20 to 30 times steady state annual pension expenditure. The average level of EU spending is over 10 percent of GDP.

<sup>7</sup> There are few other papers so far which outline the basic structure of a more coordinated European social policy, even less pension system. One recent exception is Bertola et al. (2001) who propose contingent insurance provisions with three core elements: a minimum contribution rate, a close contribution-benefit link, and no penalization when moving.

### **c. The crucial (first) pillar – Non-Financial or Notional Defined Contribution (NDC) plan<sup>8</sup>**

To motivate the choice of NDC as the crucial pillar of a future Pan-European pension system, this subsection progresses in three parts: (i) outlining the basic structure of an NDC system; (ii) highlighting its capacity to deal with system objectives and reform needs; and (iii) presenting the ease of transition for most (but not all) EU member countries.

**(i) Basic structure of ideal NDC:<sup>9</sup>** One main attraction of an NDC system is the simplicity of its basic structure if one follows the rule book, that is, if it is seen as a system which makes the algebraic and economic logic and constraints of an (unfunded) pension system explicit. Simply put, an NDC system consists of an individual account system to which contributions by individuals (and their employers) are earmarked, notional interests paid, and at retirement the accumulated (notional) amount used to determine the level of annuity based on the residual life expectancy (and the notional interest rate). As a result, the system should be quasi-actuarially fair at the margin and on average.<sup>10</sup> Crucial elements for design and implementation are: (1) The choice of a notional interest rate consistent with internal rate of return of a PAYGO scheme, that is growth rate of aggregate (covered) wage sum. Per-capita rates of wage or GDP growth or contribution revenue will not do the trick if the contribution rate is constant, but the discussion about the (most) appropriate notional interest rate choice is far from over (see Settergren and Mikula, 2003). (2) The choice

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<sup>8</sup> This paper is not the first one which proposes an NDC-type structure for a Pan-European pension system. The idea has popped-up in various papers and presentations (including by the author) and references include Feldstein (2001) and Gora (2003). Yet, this paper provides, perhaps, the most comprehensive treatment so far.

NDCs for low- and middle-income countries have found very little attention. For a first exploratory paper see Lindeman, Robalino and Rutkowski (2003).

<sup>9</sup> What constitutes an ideal NDC system and how it fares compared with other benefit options (such as Non-Financial Defined Benefit or Financial Defined Contribution schemes), or how it performs in reality and under political stress is still very much open to discussion (see, for example, Disney 1999, Salvador-Valdes 2000, and Williamson and Williams 2003).

For this reason an NDC conference has been organized by the World Bank and the Swedish Social Insurance Board and took place in Sandhamn, Sweden, on September 28-30, 2003. For the agenda and papers see the web-site below; some of the papers will be quoted in the text: <http://www.rfv.se/konferens/index.htm>. The conference volume is planned for mid-2004 and will be published as Holzmann and Palmer (2004).

<sup>10</sup> The discount rate is the rate of aggregate wage growth which is below the (risk-adjusted) interest rate in a dynamically efficient economy. The latter applies to a fully funded DC system which is considered actuarially fair. Unfunded DC systems – i.e. NDC – come close but are only quasi-actuarial.

of remaining life-expectancy. Politically determined underestimation (for example by taking the cross-section life expectancies instead of estimated cohort life expectancies) to deliver higher annuities will also jeopardize the financial sustainability. (3) The indexation of benefits. While indexation beyond price adjustments is, in principle, feasible, it is suggested to keep benefits constant in real terms. Such an under-indexation compared to a steady state helps to build-up a reserve fund.<sup>11</sup> (4) A reserve fund is needed as an NDC system cannot guarantee balancing the pension budget in every period, i.e. to be fully immune against economic and demographic risks. (5) Other important basic design elements, discussed below, concern the minimum eligibility age to own pension and to minimum pension, if any; the introduction of redistributive elements; and transition rules to new NDC benefits.

**(ii) Dealing with system objectives and reform needs:** An NDC pillar (together with a well designed basic plus voluntary pillar) is able to achieve all reform needs outlined in Section 2 and 3, and to fulfill all system objectives. Here we concentrate on a subset for reasons of space and importance: financial sustainability; changing family structure and establishing own pension rights; mobility across professions, and across states; and national preferences and solidarity.

Achieving financial sustainability, in particular under conditions of an aging population is one of the trademarks of an NDC system, albeit it is not fully automatic. As life expectancy increases, individuals receive a lower pension benefit for a given retirement age which they can compensate by extending their labor force participation (or additional individual saving). Hence, the system encourages a behavior that deals with aging in a consistent and balanced manner, namely splitting the increase in life expectancy between more work and more retirement leisure. Earlier or later retirement for a given age is sanctioned (rewarded) by quasi-actuarial decrements (increments) consistent with a PAYGO scheme. But financial stability cannot be achieved automatically in all periods (Valdes-Prieto 2000, Settergren and Mikula

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<sup>11</sup> The quasi-actuarially fair annuity is determined by remaining life expectancy and notional interest rate. If productivity growth is above (negative) population/labor force growth, the growth rate of aggregate wages is still positive. Hence keeping pension benefits constant instead of indexing with positive notional interest rate provides a little surplus for reserve building, and additional indexation once a steady state reserve fund is reached.

2003) which leads to the need for a reserve fund, and mechanisms to adjust revaluation and indexation, if needed.

Dealing with increasing female labor force participation, changing family structures, and rising divorces, is easy under an NDC system as it allows individualization of pension rights together with considerations of fairness and efficiency. For example, marriage and separations over the life cycle can be easily handled by splitting the accumulated (notional) amounts (contributions and interests) of the time together. But even if the marriage lasts till retirement one can imagine a splitting of benefits at retirement (as anyhow unisex survival probabilities may be applied). Also survivorship can be handled in an easy manner: For example, widows/ers with very young children receive a generous transitory pension till, say, the children enter school, and the split accumulations from prior marriage help build her (or his) own pension account and eliminates any pension benefit trap. Since in most European countries, accumulated financial and physical assets during marriage are split at divorce it would be inconsistent not to split the accumulated pension rights.

Mobility across professions can easily and quickly be established as an NDC plan allows immediate harmonization of pension schemes with little technical problems. Take civil servants pensions to be integrated into a national NDC pillar. For those already retired, nothing changes. For those with accumulated pension rights, these rights can be estimated with high precision, transformed into a present value and credited to an individual (notional) account. The next month (or year) this individual gets credited the unified contributions and notional interests as everybody else. As a result for those very close to retirement, little change in the pension amount takes place, while for those with only a few years of work record, the new system dominates by far. Quite likely such a reform will need to be accompanied by a review of the overall compensation package of the public sector, leading to changes in earnings profile or, perhaps, introduction of supplementary but funded pensions of DC type.

The mobility across EU member countries can also be made very easy under an NDC plan. Albeit the accumulated amounts are only notional, they are very precise and allow an easy aggregation across countries with two main approaches. Under a *transfer approach* a worker moving from, say, Germany to France would take his accumulated amount along (i.e. the German social security scheme would need to

make a cash transfer to the French social security scheme), and the pension would be calculated and disbursed in the country when he or she stops their activity and applies for a pension. From a national point of view only the balance for all labor market migrants (to and from the country) need to be transferred which is likely to be modest. Under the alternative *preservation approach* each worker would keep his account and continue to receive national notional interests till retirement. Then the individual would receive partial pensions from as many countries he or she has worked in. Clearly, the second approach seems more transaction-cost intensive and may create a problem in case minimum pensions are granted (by which country—the final one of residence ?). Of course, social arbitrage is not excluded under the first approach as individuals may be tempted to move before retirement to a country with high minimum pension, low remaining life expectancy and low income tax rates.

But incentives for social arbitrage will always exist in case of national preferences and different depth of national solidarity across member countries, and NDCs cum social pensions allow for national preferences. For example, one country may prefer a frugal mandated pension for its residents and prescribes a low NDC contribution rate (say 10 percent) and expects more voluntary contributions to well regulated funded schemes (say also 10 percent), while the other prefers a high target replacement rate and mandates a higher contribution rate accordingly (say 20 percent), but expects few people to contribute to a funded pillar. Individuals moving between these two countries would not fare too differently. The NDC approach exhibits national solidarity through its pooled rate of return approach—one single notional interest rate—and the sharing of economic and demographic risks. The second element of solidarity—redistribution—can also be easily introduced in NDC systems but requires direct payments from the budget at the time of granting. For example, low-income workers can be provided a co-payment to their contribution or for periods of recognized unemployment, the contributions to the NDC system are paid in cash by the unemployment benefits system.

**(iii) Dealing with transition issues across member countries:** The prior sub-section has already highlighted that a transition across earnings-related and unfunded pension regimes within a country is technically but not necessarily politically easy. The same applies to countries which start a *prima vista* from different systems. In the following such transition issues are discussed by country groupings.

Coordinating among the existing NDC countries. Four current or future EU countries have already introduced NDC systems: *Italy (1995)*, *Latvia (1996)*, *Poland (1999)*, and *Sweden (1999)*. While these countries share the broad system design of NDC, there are major differences in some design and implementation elements (Palmer 2003). For example, the countries use different notional interest rates, ways to determine the residual life expectancy, or transition rules to the new system. This raises two general issues: To what extent must or should a Pan-European NDC system have the same system design and implementation features (and hence be fully harmonized, except, say the contribution rate levied), and to what extent must or should the transition rules be harmonized?

For example, using different notional interest rates is primarily an issue of financial sustainability for the national scheme. Assuming that the choice of the rate of aggregated wage growth provides sustainability but the per-capita average wage growth is too high, a country which chooses the latter would need to find additional budgetary resources or cut annual benefit indexation. A priori there is no reason why such national preferences should not be granted. Of course, political shortsightedness may lead to the choice of a notional interest rate which is too favorable but least financially sustainable. But no system is politically foolproof.

There are more arguments for some harmonization of transition from the old to the new system. For example, Italy and Sweden will only gradually phase in the NDC system over the next decades while Latvia has moved all workers in one stroke to the new system. If mobility across professions and countries is the main goal of a Pan-European reform, it is the latter approach which is needed – an approach which, however, allows for the expression of national preferences, in particular concerning the generosity of the transition rules at the detriment of financial sustainability.

Transitioning quasi-NDC countries: Two countries have unfunded DB systems which almost mimic NDC systems and hence should be easy to transit – *Germany and France*. It is by now common knowledge that a DB system which uses lifetime income revalued with national wage growth and actuarially determined annuities is algebraically equivalent to an NDC system (Disney, 1999). In reality differences do exist (Legros 2003) which does not prevent a transition toward a common NDC design but does not make the transition different from other earnings-related schemes.

Transitioning other Bismarckian systems: The transitioning of the many other current and future EU countries with a typical unfunded and earnings-related social insurance scheme for old age is, in principle, very simple and equivalent of transitioning civil servants benefits to NDC (discussed above): Calculate the acquired pension rights and transform them into the present value, i.e. a lump sum amount to be credited to the individual account. The alternative approach would be to use past contribution records and past notional interest rates to determine the initial amount. In an actuarially fair scheme the result would be the same. Under current conditions the conjecture is that in most countries the first (top-down) approach is cheaper for governments as it will capitalize on the recent reforms which have reduced the present value of pensions (via increase in retirement age, change in indexation, etc.).<sup>12</sup> Hence for fiscal reasons a substantive parametric reform prior to a move toward NDC makes sense. This will be the case for Austria which just did such a parametric reform and which prepares a move toward NDC/individual accounts. An NDC reform is also in political discussion in Hungary and the Czech Republic, and proposed by researchers in countries such as Spain, Portugal, Greece and Belgium (see, for example, Vidal-Melia and Dominguez-Fabian, 2003).

Transitioning the European outliers: While Bismarckian-type systems by far dominate the European scene by the number of population covered, there are four main countries which have a more Beverage-type system, and for which a transition toward NDC would constitute a main policy change: Ireland with a flat rate contributory and non-contributory system; the UK with a flat-rate contributory plus an earnings-related system (SERPS) with opting-out options to private sector arrangements for the latter; Denmark and the Netherlands with a universal pension which is flat in the former, and pro-rata with regard to residency in the latter country (see ECP 2001). The EU Accession countries in Central and Eastern Europe have inherited a pension system which is typically earnings related and this was not changed during the economic transition (except the reforms moving toward a multi-pillar structure; see annex to Holzmann, MacKellar and Rutkowski, 2003). If a transition/non-transition were to be envisaged what would be the approach? For a typical universal and basic system plus a quasi-mandated funded scheme, such as in Denmark, one solution to achieve some

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<sup>12</sup> The second (bottom-up) approach may be cheaper for countries which increased contribution rates from low levels and have not undertaken a benefit-cutting reform.

coordination with regard to mobility would consist in providing a buy-in option to the universal pension as well as funded scheme by transfers of an accumulated NDC amount, or the reverse when migrating from Denmark.

### **c. The funded - second or third - pillar in a Pan-European pension system**

With a well designed Pan-European NDC scheme that allows for national preferences, what is the role of a funded pillar, what structure should it have, and what needs to be done to make it work well? All current and future EU member countries already have funded pillars at different levels of importance and sophistication which, again, will need some adjustment and coordination to achieve the objectives of a Pan-European pension system (annex table 7).<sup>13</sup>

The role of a funded pillar is essentially fourfold: The first main purpose is consumption smoothing beyond NDC benefits. While an NDC system can provide generous replacement rates if the contribution is sufficiently high, as a mandated, general scheme it should not do so. A very high mandated contribution rate under an NDC scheme would resemble a labor tax rate with all the known negative social and economic effects, in particular for credit constrained individuals (Lindbeck and Persson, 2003), albeit the incidence effects on wage levels seem to be lower if the reciprocity between contributions and benefits is stronger (Ooghe, Schokkaert and Flechet, 2003). An actuarially fair funded pillar allows better consumption smoothing according to individual preferences and has less distortionary effects on individual labor supply and savings decisions. The second main purpose is to support retirement flexibility in an aging society. NDC as a quasi-actuarial scheme encourages later retirement with high decrements for early leavers. To compensate for future lower pensions at early age, individuals need to plan to stay longer in the labor market or to save more under a funded pillar. The alternative of voluntary NDC contribution to finance an earlier retirement is possible but has to be weighted against the third main purpose—risk diversification. As funded and unfunded pension pillars have a different exposure to economic, demographic and political risks, and as their rates of return are little correlated, diversifying pension benefits from two different pillars is welfare enhancing. It is often claimed that risks will increase in an aging and

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<sup>13</sup> For details on supplementary and complementary funded pension arrangements in Europe, and beyond, see ISSA (2003).



globalizing world which is subject to technological and many other changes making risk diversification even more important (see e.g. Bovenberg, 2003). Last but not least, funded pillars are important to support Pan-European mobility, and beyond. In the proposed more coordinated but not harmonized Pan-European pension system, differences would still exist. Their mobility reducing effects, however, can be limited with a strong funded pillar. Furthermore, labor mobility with the rest of the world is also bound to increase, with Europeans working some part of their lives abroad, and migrants from developing countries working part of their lives in Europe. Again, a strong funded pillar which can easily be taken back home would make life for migrant workers, and host and sending countries so much easier (Holzmann 2004).

For the potentially best Pan-European structure of a funded pillar, a number of choices would need to be made, but most of them are suggested to be rather easy. First, the issue of a mandated or voluntary pillar, a corporate (second) or an individual (third) pillar.<sup>14</sup> Mandating the second pillar at the explicit detriment of the first NDC pillar raises the issue of transition costs, and the assessment by many pension economists is likely to be that it is not worth the effort. In addition, it can be argued that the economic rationale for mandating a high replacement rate is decreasing because of reduced myopia of individuals and better financial retirement instruments. What can and should be considered is to transform existing and mandated severance payments which exist in all EU member states into funded unemployment benefit cum retirement benefit accounts as some countries have started to do.<sup>15</sup> Hence, I would argue that (newly) funded pillars should, in principle, be voluntary and the rules should allow for both corporate and individual pensions in a well designed but simple manner. Second, the issue of defined benefit (DB) or defined contribution (DC) plan emerges. While as individuals we are likely to prefer a DB plan, best in the form of

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<sup>14</sup> Please watch out: In the European terminology second pillar refers to corporate pensions (whether mandated or voluntary) and third pillar to individual pensions (whether mandated or voluntary). In the Anglo-Saxon terminology (and beyond) used by the World Bank, the second pillar refers to mandated and funded pensions (whether corporate or individual), and the third pillar to voluntary and funded provisions (whether corporate or individual). In this paper the European terminology is used.

<sup>15</sup> On this topic of severance payments and their reform, a conference was held in Laxenburg, near Vienna, on November 7 and 8, 2003. The conference was jointly organized by the World Bank, Washington, DC, and the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Economic Analysis, Vienna, and was hosted by the International Institute for Applied System Analyses, Laxenburg. For the many interesting papers visit [www.worldbank.org/SP](http://www.worldbank.org/SP) or <http://members.vienna.at/libecon/boltzanalyse>. The conference volume is scheduled to be issued mid-2004 and will be published as Holzmann and Vodopivec (2004).

the final salary-scheme type, economic rationale and recent trends tend to speak in favor of DC schemes. It is the least distortionary scheme with regard to individual labor supply decisions, including retirement, and it provides the required mobility across professions and states. Third, simplicity and transparency of the approach will be of importance, i.e. the structure of the retirement products should be simple and there should be at least one set of instruments which is standardized across the EU. The suggested instruments are some kind of individual or personal retirement account as well as some corporate pension account offered by the employer as they exist with a relatively simple structure in, say, the US and Canada. Complicated structures à la Germany which try to achieve too many objectives at the same time should be avoided. Last but not least, the mandated annuitization of the accumulated retirement saving is not suggested, at least as long as the NDC account allows the financing of a minimum pension.

Finally, funded pillars as part of a Pan-European pension scheme have also coordination requirements at the level of regulation, supervision and taxation which are likely to be difficult to fulfill. At the level of regulation and supervision, the question of mutual recognition versus more centralized approaches emerge. At the level of taxation, the issue of consistency of taxation (income versus consumption-type taxation, and in the latter case whether it is back-loaded or front-loaded) and recognition of tax deduction for contribution to funded pillars across Europe emerges. While progress has been made toward harmonization of tax treatment by EU directives, the launch of new infringement procedures against Belgium, Spain, France, Italy and Portugal, and pushing forward existing cases against Denmark signal that more needs to be done. The Pension Directive which emerged in 2003 after 10 years of preparation and discussion seemingly needs time for digestion by financial market institutions and multi-national enterprises before a judgment can be made (IPE 2003).

#### **d. The social pension pillar: A strengthened social or non-contributory pension in EU member countries**

All current and future EU member states have some income provisions for the elderly poor, at least in the form of general social assistance but increasingly also in the form of a means-tested social pension, and a few in the form of a universal demogrant (Table 8). It is strongly suggested that a Pan-European pension system will need to

strengthen the social (or zero /non-contributory) pillar which deals with the vulnerable elderly in Europe for reasons of social objectives and system consistency.

The main arguments for a strengthened social pension pillar are twofold: First, having under the new structure a quasi-actuarial NDC system as the first pillar and actuarial funded second and third pillars tends to increase the efficiency in the labor market but reduces the redistribution of income toward the poor. Shifting from a non-actuarial to an actuarial system can result in Pareto improvement but will require (keeping or introducing) a minimum benefit (Lindbeck and Persson, 2003). Second, income support for the very vulnerable elderly to prevent old-age poverty is part of the adequacy objectives of any pension system. A strengthened social pillar can be motivated by the increase in vulnerability of the elderly as aging progresses, and by the solidarity objectives of the European Union. With incomplete and perhaps falling coverage under earnings-related schemes one can conjecture that poverty incidence will increase as the increase in life expectancy continues.<sup>16</sup>

With regard to how such a strengthened social pension pillar should be structured, three main issues emerge: Should there be a minimum pension in the NDC system in addition to a social pension pillar? How is this related to the social pension? And what eligibility criteria and level should be applied? First, there are a few good arguments for a minimum pension under the NDC system, most importantly it strengthens incentives for formal labor force participation. However, in order not to contradict the neutrality objective of the NDC structure with regard to the individual retirement decision, eligibility needs to be restricted. For example while allowing individuals to retire from the age of, say 60 onward, it may be required to have a minimum accumulated notional amount equivalent to 100+ percent of the minimum pension or else the need to reach the standard retirement age of, say, 67 (which is increased with rise in life expectancy). Second, coordinating a minimum NDC pension with a social pension with regard to labor market incentives requires either different amounts, different eligibility ages and/or different eligibility criteria (such as some kind of means or affluence testing of social pillar). Finally, eligibility for a social pension may have to be conditioned on higher ages (say 70 onward), but means-testing may be kept light, for example in the form of affluence testing which excludes people

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<sup>16</sup> Data for European OECD countries suggests that while poverty incidence tends to be the highest among the age group 65+, it is in this group that it has been falling most markedly between mid-80s and 90s (for the Czech Republic and Hungary, early to late 90s). See Förster (2003).

having access to other pension provisions and financial assets. How much national preferences such a social pension pillar would be able to exhibit without inhibiting too much the incentive structure of a proposed Pan-European pension system is open for discussion and requires more research.

## 5. Concluding Remarks

This paper attempted to motivate why a more coordinated Pan-European pension system is needed and which potential structure could achieve this best. The needs for a more radical as well as cross-member state pension reform are both social and economic, with the latter closely linked with the common economic area and currency. The suggested structure for the current and future EU members states is a multi-pillar system, with a NDC system at its core, and supplementary funded pensions and social pensions at its wings. Such an approach would fulfill all generic and EU specific demands on a Pan-European pension system, including the room for national preferences.

Beside the **why** of a Pan-European approach and **which** structure it may have, what remains to be sketched is **how** such a system reform could come about. One could imagine three main avenues:

First, an approach initiated and led by the EU Commission: possible but not likely. First, there is no intention by the member states to empower the Commission with such a reform request. Social policy continues to be seen as a national agenda item subject to the subsidiarity principle and hence not open for “centralization” by the Commission. Second, there are no visible efforts by the Commission to take such a lead as the necessity for a more rapid and comprehensive reform does not seem to be seen. Last but not least, the recently introduced method of open coordination as a peer review process to accelerate reforms in the member countries has its merits but is unlikely to lead to rapid national reforms even less to create a Pan-European reform vision.

Second, a competitive approach across EU countries in which one of the existing or reformed pension systems will gradually be adopted by other countries as they see advantages with regard to social and economic policy goals: Again possible, a bit more likely, but not sufficiently rapid, and even if so, the outcome might be sub-

optimal. First, the advantages of reformed systems emerge and get documented only with lapses of time which may be measured in decades, and this may prove too late. Second, imitation of system reforms are and will be taking place (for example the inspiration of the Polish by the Latvian NDC reform, or the possible introduction of individual accounts in Austria and Hungary inspired by the Swedish reform). But imitation by other countries is likely to be restricted. Third, even if all countries were to follow a lead example under competitive pressure, this may not ensure sufficient consistency of approaches across countries to provide the needed mobility of the workforce in Europe. Last but not least, and “to the extent that social policy is meant to redress market failures or to implement solidarity transfers, competition among systems will not lead to efficient outcomes when the elements of the relevant equation span the borders of policymaking constituency” (Bertola et al., 2001). By definition, collective action is needed to eliminate inefficient or unfair economic interactions; hence, one can argue that bringing back competition at the inter-constituency level defeats both purposes (Sinn, 2003).

Third, a cross-country led government approach: Issues of pension reform have started to be addressed by government officials, for example by the Economic Policy Committee of the EU which represents high-level officials from ministries of finance and economy of EU member countries (e.g. EPC 2001). EPC has, so far, been largely concerned with the fiscal consequences of aging but this may be enhanced by the broader stability issues, including the need for cross-European labor mobility. To foster the points for a better coordinated, Pan-European pension system is quite likely the tasks of academics and research institutions, examined and supported by the EPC or similar core groups, and at some moment in the future espoused by a charismatic European politician as reform champion. Perhaps this will happen after the first main asymmetric shock hits Euroland.

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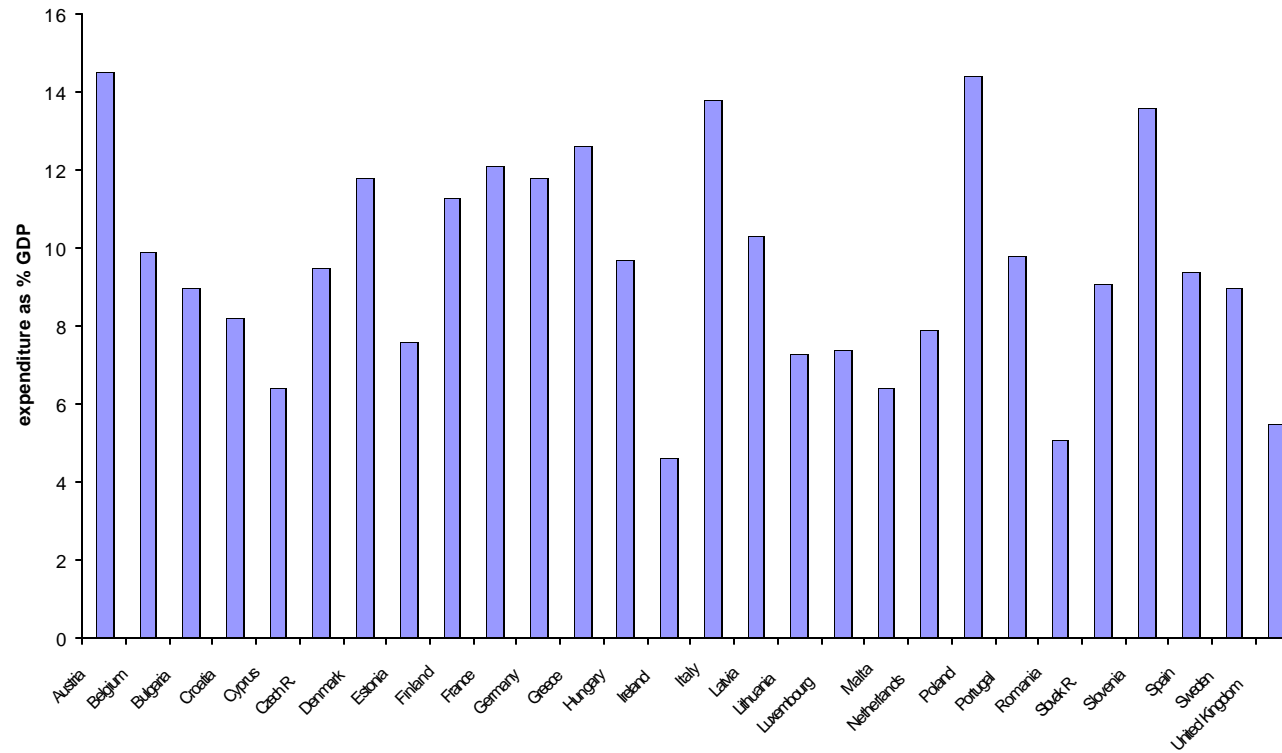
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## **Annex – Figures and Tables**

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**Figure 1. Pension Expenditure in EU and EUA Countries (plus Croatia), 2000 or latest (percent of GDP)**



Sources: Economic Policy Committee 2001, Palacios and Pallares-Miralles 2000, updated; World Bank pension dataset 2003.

Notes: Croatia data from World Bank Labor Markets dataset 2003

**Table 1. Projections of Old-Age Dependency in EU and EUA Countries 2000-2050  
(ratio of people aged over 64 to working age population, percent)**

| <b>Country</b>     | <b>2000</b> | <b>2010</b> | <b>2020</b> | <b>2030</b> | <b>2040</b> | <b>2050</b> |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Austria            | 25          | 29          | 32          | 44          | 55          | 55          |
| Belgium            | 28          | 29          | 36          | 46          | 51          | 50          |
| Denmark            | 24          | 27          | 34          | 39          | 45          | 42          |
| Finland            | 25          | 28          | 39          | 47          | 47          | 48          |
| France             | 27          | 28          | 36          | 44          | 50          | 51          |
| Germany            | 26          | 33          | 36          | 47          | 55          | 53          |
| Greece             | 28          | 32          | 36          | 42          | 51          | 59          |
| Ireland            | 19          | 19          | 25          | 30          | 36          | 44          |
| Italy              | 29          | 34          | 40          | 49          | 64          | 67          |
| Luxembourg         | 23          | 26          | 31          | 40          | 45          | 42          |
| Netherlands        | 22          | 25          | 33          | 42          | 48          | 45          |
| Portugal           | 25          | 27          | 30          | 35          | 43          | 49          |
| Spain              | 27          | 29          | 33          | 42          | 56          | 66          |
| Sweden             | 30          | 31          | 38          | 43          | 47          | 46          |
| United Kingdom     | 26          | 27          | 32          | 40          | 47          | 46          |
| <b>EU average</b>  | <b>27</b>   | <b>30</b>   | <b>35</b>   | <b>44</b>   | <b>52</b>   | <b>53</b>   |
| Bulgaria           | 24          | 24          | 29          | 34          | 41          | 53          |
| Cyprus             | 18          | 20          | 26          | 32          | 34          | 39          |
| Czech R.           | 20          | 22          | 32          | 38          | 47          | 59          |
| Estonia            | 23          | 25          | 30          | 36          | 42          | 57          |
| Hungary            | 21          | 23          | 29          | 33          | 40          | 50          |
| Latvia             | 23          | 26          | 29          | 37          | 44          | 56          |
| Lithuania          | 21          | 24          | 26          | 35          | 40          | 43          |
| Malta              | 18          | 22          | 32          | 39          | 40          | 46          |
| Poland             | 18          | 18          | 26          | 33          | 37          | 50          |
| Romania            | 20          | 20          | 24          | 26          | 36          | 45          |
| Slovak R.          | 16          | 17          | 23          | 30          | 36          | 47          |
| Slovenia           | 20          | 24          | 32          | 44          | 53          | 64          |
| <b>EUA average</b> | <b>20</b>   | <b>22</b>   | <b>28</b>   | <b>35</b>   | <b>41</b>   | <b>51</b>   |

Sources: EU countries - EPC 2001, EUA countries - UN Population Division 2002

**Table 2. Public Pension Expenditure in EU and Accession Countries in 2000-2050  
(percent of GDP)**

| Country                     | 2000        | 2010        | 2020        | 2030        | 2040        | 2050        |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Austria                     | 14.5        | 14.9        | 16          | 18.1        | 18.3        | 17          |
| Belgium                     | 10          | 9.9         | 11.4        | 13.3        | 13.7        | 13.3        |
| Denmark <sup>1</sup>        | 10.5        | 12.5        | 13.8        | 14.5        | 14          | 13.3        |
| Finland                     | 11.3        | 11.6        | 12.9        | 14.9        | 16          | 15.9        |
| France                      | 12.1        | 13.1        | 15          | 16          | 15.8        | ..          |
| Germany                     | 11.8        | 11.2        | 12.6        | 15.5        | 16.6        | 16.9        |
| Greece                      | 12.6        | 12.6        | 15.4        | 19.6        | 23.8        | 24.8        |
| Ireland <sup>2</sup>        | 4.6         | 5           | 6.7         | 7.6         | 8.3         | 9           |
| Italy                       | 13.8        | 13.9        | 14.8        | 15.7        | 15.7        | 14.1        |
| Luxembourg                  | 7.4         | 7.5         | 8.2         | 9.2         | 9.5         | 9.3         |
| Netherlands                 | 7.9         | 9.1         | 11.1        | 13.1        | 14.1        | 13.6        |
| Portugal                    | 9.8         | 11.8        | 13.1        | 13.6        | 13.8        | 13.2        |
| Spain                       | 9.4         | 8.9         | 9.9         | 12.6        | 16          | 17.3        |
| Sweden                      | 9           | 9.6         | 10.7        | 11.4        | 11.4        | 10.7        |
| United Kingdom              | 5.5         | 5.1         | 4.9         | 5.2         | 5           | 4.4         |
| <b>EU</b>                   | <b>10.4</b> | <b>10.4</b> | <b>11.5</b> | <b>13</b>   | <b>13.6</b> | <b>13.3</b> |
| Cyprus                      | 8           | ..          | ..          | 11.9        | ..          | 14.8        |
| Czech Republic <sup>4</sup> | 7.8         | ..          | ..          | ..          | ..          | 14.6        |
| Estonia                     | 6.9         | ..          | ..          | ..          | ..          | ..          |
| Hungary <sup>4</sup>        | 6           | ..          | ..          | ..          | ..          | 7.2         |
| Latvia <sup>3</sup>         | 9.8         | ..          | ..          | ..          | ..          | ..          |
| Lithuania                   | 5.3         | ..          | ..          | 6           | ..          | 7           |
| Malta                       | 5.4         | ..          | ..          | ..          | ..          | ..          |
| Poland                      | 10.8        | ..          | ..          | 9.6         | ..          | 9.7         |
| Slovakia <sup>3</sup>       | 7.9         | ..          | ..          | ..          | ..          | ..          |
| Slovenia                    | 13.2        | ..          | ..          | 19.7        | ..          | 18.1        |
| Bulgaria                    | 9.1         | ..          | ..          | ..          | ..          | ..          |
| Romania                     | 6.4         | ..          | ..          | 7.8         | ..          | 8.2         |
| <b>EUA</b>                  | <b>8.05</b> | ..          | ..          | <b>11.0</b> | ..          | <b>11.4</b> |

Sources: EPC 2001, Pre-accession Economic Programmes 2002.

Notes: For most EU member states, these projections include most public replacement income for persons aged 55 and over.

1- For Denmark, the results include the semi-funded labor market pension (ATP)

2- Results for Ireland are as % GNP not GDP

3- Source: Gesellschaft für Versicherungswissenschaft und -gestaltung e. V. (which in turn draws on national statistics)

4- Source: OECD 2002

.. indicates data not available

**Table 3. Labor force participation – male and female in EU and EUA countries, 1960, 1980, 2000, and 2050**

| Country                     | Male        |             |             |             |             |             |             |             | female      |             |             |             |             |            |            |            |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                             | 15-64       |             |             |             | 65+         |             |             |             | 15-64       |             |             |             | 65+         |            |            |            |
|                             | 1960        | 1980        | 2000        | 2050        | 1960        | 1980        | 2000        | 2050        | 1960        | 1980        | 2000        | 2050        | 1960        | 1980       | 2000       | 2050       |
| Austria                     | 90.1        | 84.9        | 74.4        | 79.3        | 15.0        | 4.5         | 2           | 6           | 53          | 54.4        | 57.7        | 67.8        | 7.0         | 2.6        | 1          | 5          |
| Belgium                     | 85.9        | 79.7        | 71.7        | 71.9        | 9.5         | 4.6         | 1.4         | 1.3         | 30.5        | 41.2        | 58.6        | 67.8        | 3.3         | 1.3        | 0.5        | 0.6        |
| Denmark                     | 92.3        | 88.3        | 85.1        | 81.8        | 32.6        | 15.4        | 9.4         | 8.1         | 42.8        | 71.3        | 77.3        | 80.5        | 8.0         | 5.2        | 2.7        | 2.4        |
| Finland                     | 87.3        | 79.3        | 74.8        | 73.9        | 31.7        | 6.8         | 4           | 2.5         | 55.5        | 69.4        | 73.0        | 74.7        | 12.0        | 3.0        | 1.4        | 1          |
| France                      | 88.9        | 81.5        | 75.6        | 75.1        | 26.0        | 5.8         | 2.1         | 1.7         | 43.6        | 55.1        | 62.2        | 70.0        | 10.2        | 2.9        | 1.2        | 1          |
| Germany                     | 91          | 83.2        | 80.7        | 80.1        | 24.0        | 8.9         | 4.5         | 2.4         | 50.4        | 51.9        | 64.7        | 71.3        | 8.0         | 4.2        | 1.7        | 1.1        |
| Greece                      | 90.1        | 83.5        | 76.7        | 76.6        | 45.0        | 27.0        | 9.6         | 7.9         | 26.3        | 31.8        | 46.7        | 67.0        | 8.7         | 6.1        | 3.7        | 3.2        |
| Ireland <sup>2</sup>        | 90.9        | 85          | 87.8        | 87.3        | 54.0        | 26.8        | 13.6        | 11.7        | 31.1        | 34.7        | 56.4        | 75.8        | 15.0        | 6.0        | 2.4        | 2          |
| Italy                       | 89.2        | 79          | 73.0        | 76.1        | 27.5        | 12.4        | 5.5         | 3.7         | 30.4        | 38.4        | 46.4        | 66.9        | 5.6         | 3.5        | 1.5        | 1.4        |
| Luxembourg <sup>1</sup>     | 88.7        | 82.3        | 113.8       | 148.4       | ..          | ..          | ..          | ..          | 30.8        | 39          | 74.3        | 115.0       | ..          | ..         | ..         | ..         |
| Netherlands                 | 90.9        | 77.6        | 77.4        | 76.2        | 19.9        | 4.8         | 1           | 1           | 24.9        | 36.1        | 55.2        | 70.9        | 2.5         | 1.0        | 1          | 1          |
| Portugal                    | 93.5        | 87.1        | 87.5        | 87.2        | 62.9        | 29.7        | 16.7        | 14.3        | 18.4        | 52.4        | 66.4        | 81.5        | 11.0        | 8.4        | 7.1        | 6.5        |
| Spain <sup>3</sup>          | 92.8        | 86.4        | 83.6        | 85.5        | 56.6        | 12.3        | 2.8         | 2.8         | 20.3        | 32.9        | 54.7        | 75.2        | 9.4         | 4.1        | 1.1        | 1.1        |
| Sweden                      | 88.8        | 87.9        | 81.3        | 83.3        | 27.6        | 10.4        | 6.8         | 7.2         | 38          | 75.3        | 76.5        | 82.6        | 4.5         | 2.6        | 3.5        | 3.9        |
| United Kingdom <sup>3</sup> | 94.6        | 89.2        | 87.6        | 85.9        | 26.6        | 11.0        | 6.8         | 5.8         | 43.6        | 57          | 69.9        | 75.5        | 5.4         | 4.1        | 2.7        | 2.4        |
| <b>EU</b>                   | <b>90.3</b> | <b>83.7</b> | <b>82.1</b> | <b>84.6</b> | <b>32.8</b> | <b>12.9</b> | <b>6.2</b>  | <b>5.5</b>  | <b>36.0</b> | <b>49.4</b> | <b>62.7</b> | <b>76.2</b> | <b>7.9</b>  | <b>3.9</b> | <b>2.3</b> | <b>2.3</b> |
| Bulgaria                    | 88.4        | 82.7        | 77.2        | 77.2        | 38.3        | 18.8        | 10.1        | 8.6         | 68.9        | 70.4        | 71.4        | 68.8        | 8.5         | 3.9        | 3          | 2.5        |
| Cyprus                      | 91.7        | 88.6        | 88          | 86.1        | 53          | 35.7        | 20.5        | 0.2         | 42          | 46.7        | 56.9        | 59.1        | 17.6        | 11.8       | 7.8        | 6.3        |
| Czech R.                    | 86.5        | 84.8        | 83          | 80.6        | 24.4        | 18.8        | 11.7        | 10.3        | 61.6        | 75          | 75          | 71.7        | 9.2         | 7.1        | 4.9        | 4.5        |
| Estonia                     | 87.2        | 85.4        | 81.7        | 81.5        | 20.5        | 17.5        | 23          | 22.4        | 67.3        | 79.2        | 74          | 74          | 6.8         | 9.5        | 13.3       | 13.4       |
| Hungary                     | 91.7        | 84.8        | 78.7        | 76.2        | 57          | 3.8         | 0.9         | 0.9         | 46.9        | 62          | 61.1        | 60.5        | 20          | 3          | 0.2        | 0.2        |
| Latvia                      | 84.8        | 84.8        | 82.2        | 83          | 24.3        | 22.4        | 20.2        | 19.2        | 64.3        | 77.9        | 74.2        | 75.4        | 12.8        | 12.3       | 11.3       | 10.8       |
| Lithuania                   | 83.3        | 83          | 81.2        | 81.7        | 32          | 19.4        | 12.3        | 11          | 61.3        | 74.8        | 70.8        | 71.7        | 9.5         | 7.8        | 6.5        | 5.9        |
| Malta                       | 88          | 85.7        | 78.8        | 76.3        | 27.3        | 14.3        | 5           | 4           | 17.2        | 22.5        | 30.2        | 34.6        | 0           | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| Poland                      | 89.8        | 84.2        | 77.9        | 77.4        | 57.5        | 30          | 24.1        | 21.3        | 62.1        | 67.7        | 66.2        | 66.4        | 30          | 17.5       | 15.3       | 13.8       |
| Romania                     | 93          | 83.6        | 76.8        | 76.7        | 62.6        | 11.4        | 4.9         | 3.9         | 72.4        | 69          | 61.2        | 61.4        | 30          | 8.9        | 4.2        | 3.5        |
| Slovak R.                   | 86.5        | 83.5        | 82.1        | 81.8        | 30.9        | 19.8        | 11          | 9.6         | 47.4        | 69.3        | 74.6        | 72.7        | 7.7         | 4.7        | 4.2        | 3.6        |
| Slovenia                    | 89.9        | 81.9        | 76          | 74.1        | 57.1        | 19          | 11.8        | 10.2        | 44.3        | 67          | 66.5        | 64.9        | 13.5        | 10         | 8.6        | 8          |
| <b>EUA<sup>4</sup></b>      | <b>88.4</b> | <b>84.4</b> | <b>80.3</b> | <b>79.4</b> | <b>40.4</b> | <b>19.2</b> | <b>13.0</b> | <b>10.1</b> | <b>54.6</b> | <b>65.1</b> | <b>65.2</b> | <b>65.1</b> | <b>13.8</b> | <b>8.0</b> | <b>6.6</b> | <b>6.0</b> |

Sources: EPC 2001, OECD 2003, ILO Laborstat 2003, UN Population Division 2002.

Notes: 1 - estimates for Luxembourg assumes increase in cross-border workers which explains the high rate

2 - Projections for EUA countries are for the year 2010, 3 - population aged 20-64.

**Table 4. Changing family structures: Divorces in EU and EUA countries, around 2000**

| <b>Country</b>    | <b>Divorces (per 1000 people)</b> | <b>Marriages (per 1000 people)</b> |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Ireland           | 0.7                               | 5.1                                |
| Italy             | 0.7                               | 4.9                                |
| Greece            | 0.9                               | 5.4                                |
| Spain             | 1.0                               | 5.2                                |
| Portugal          | 1.8                               | 5.7                                |
| France            | 2.0                               | 5.1                                |
| Luxembourg        | 2.3                               | 4.5                                |
| Netherlands       | 2.3                               | 5.1                                |
| Germany           | 2.4                               | 4.7                                |
| Sweden            | 2.4                               | 4.0                                |
| Austria           | 2.5                               | 4.2                                |
| Finland           | 2.6                               | 4.8                                |
| United Kingdom    | 2.6                               | 5.1                                |
| Denmark           | 2.7                               | 6.6                                |
| Belgium           | 2.9                               | 4.2                                |
| <b>EU average</b> | <b>1.9</b>                        | <b>5.1</b>                         |
| Bulgaria          | 1.3                               | ..                                 |
| Cyprus            | 1.7                               | ..                                 |
| Czech Republic    | 2.9                               | ..                                 |
| Estonia           | 3.1                               | ..                                 |
| Hungary           | 2.4                               | ..                                 |
| Latvia            | 2.6                               | ..                                 |
| Lithuania         | 2.9                               | ..                                 |
| Poland            | 1.1                               | ..                                 |
| Romania           | 1.4                               | ..                                 |
| Slovakia          | 1.7                               | ..                                 |
| Slovenia          | 1.1                               | ..                                 |
| Malta             | ..                                | ..                                 |
| <b>EUA</b>        | <b>2.0</b>                        | <b>..</b>                          |

Sources: EU countries - Eurostat 2003, Office of National Statistics UK, 2001, EUA countries – American Divorce Reform 2002, UN Demographic Yearbook, 1999, Recent demographic developments in Europe 2001  
Notes: .. indicates data not available



**Table 5. Pension arrangements for widows/widowers and divorced in EU and EUA countries around 2000**

| Country  | Widow/Widowers benefit   |   | Divorcee's benefit        |  |
|----------|--|---|---------------------------|--|
|          | Eligibility  | Benefits  | Eligibility               | Benefits   |
| Austria  | Deceased met insurance or contribution requirements for disability pension or was a pensioner  | Up to 60 % of deceased spouse's pension, income tested - rates below 60% may be increased depending on beneficiary's income   |                           |  |
| Belgium  | Those aged 45+, or disabled, or caring for a child. Should have been married for at least 1 year at the time of spouse's death. Conditions are waived if child born out of marriage or in case of accidental death | 80% of deceased spouse's pension. Minimum 9102.11 euros/year if worker was fully insured, if not then reduced. If widow(er) receiving other pension: receives survivor pension only for 12 months and total pension benefits may not exceed 110% of own pension | Special pension at age 60 | 37.5% of former spouse's earnings during period of marriage less pension earned in own right during the same years |
| Bulgaria | Deceased had 5 years of service, 3 years if aged 20-25, or was a pensioner   | Minimum pension for each survivor is 90% of social pension, 1 survivor - 50% of deceased's pension, if 2, 75% and if 3 or more then 100%  |                           |  |
| Cyprus   | Conditions same as for old age pension, lump sum paid if conditions not met. Payable to widow or dependent disabled widower  | Same as old age pension + 60% supplementary pension. Widow may substitute husband's coverage record for her own for period prior to his death   |                           |  |
| Czech R. | Deceased met pension conditions or was a pensioner   | Basic amount of 1310 CZK + 50% of percentage amount of deceased's pension, payable to all widow(er)s for 1 year, thereafter only to widow(er)s aged 55(58), any age if disabled or caring for disabled/dependent child or disabled parent                       |                           |  |
| Denmark  | Survivor pension eliminated as of 1984   | Lump sum paid to widow(er) and children under 18 of deceased, amount depends on pension of the deceased   |                           |  |
| Estonia  | Widow(er) not capable of gainful activity, deceased had 1-14 years of coverage depending on age  | One survivor - 40% of deceased's pension entitlement, 2 survivors - 70%, 3 or more 100%   |                           |  |

|         |  |  |   |                               |
|---------|--|--|---|-------------------------------|
| Finland | Under age 65 if caring for a child, if childless then at least 50 at time of spouse's death, must have been married for at least 5 years, residing in Finland  | universal pension awarded for first 6 months after spouse's death, thereafter becomes income-tested  |   |                               |
| France  | At least 55 years and married for 2 years. Conditions are waived if child from marriage or if widow(er) and deceased was disabled. Personal income must be less than 13874 euros/year, must not have remarried | 54% deceased spouse's pension, income tested, payable for 2 years. If beneficiary is 50, payment extended until 55   | Eligible for survivor's pension if not remarried, pension proportionately divided if more than one surviving spouse             | 54% deceased spouse's pension |
| Germany | Deceased had 5 years of coverage, or was a pensioner   | 100% of deceased's pension first 3 months, 55% if aged 45+, disabled or caring for a child, otherwise 25%  | Former spouse eligible for survivor's pension. Amount split between widow(er) and former spouse according to length of marriage |                               |
| Greece  | Eligible for survivor's pension for 3 years, those above 40 continue to receive it provided they do not work or receive any other pension.   | Full pension paid if disabled. Those who work or receive other pension get 50% of normal survivor pension. When survivors cross 65 they are paid full pension, if receiving other pension at 65+ then they get 70% of normal pension |   |                               |
| Hungary | Deceased was pensioner or met requirements for pension at death  | 50% of insured's pension paid to widow(er) who at the time of death was 55(60), disabled or caring for 2 children, paid to other widow(er)s for 1 year only  |   |                               |
| Ireland | Annual average of at least 39 weeks paid or credited in last 3 or 5 fiscal years prior to date spouse died or attained 66, at least 24 weeks for minimum pension   | Contributory pension: up to 123.30 euros/week (144.80 euros if aged 66+), non-contributory pension: up to 118.80 euros/ week (134.00 euros if age 66+)   |   |                               |
| Italy   | Deceased was a pensioner or had 5 years of contribution of which 3 years were in the last 5 years  | 60% of insured's pension, 80% if 1 child, 100% if 2 or more children, lump sum paid if conditions for survivors pension not met, must have paid at least 1 year's contribution in last 5 years                                       | Separated spouse eligible for survivor's benefit  |                               |
| Latvia  | Deceased was insured or was a pensioner  | 50% of insured's pension, 75% if 2 survivors, 90% for 3 or more  |   |                               |

|             |  |   |                          |   |
|-------------|--|---|--------------------------|---|
| Lithuania   | Deceased must have been a pensioner or had adequate coverage for disability pension at the time of death, widow(er) who has reached old age or is disabled eligible  | 20% of deceased's benefit, 25% for each child, total may not exceed 80% of deceased's pension   |                          |   |
| Luxembourg  | Insured had 12 months coverage in 3 years prior to death or was a pensioner  | 100% of insured's basic old age pension + 75% of increment earned by insured, payable without regard to personal income   | Divorced spouse eligible | Amount depends on years of marriage, not on personal income |
| Malta       | Deceased paid 156 weeks of contribution with annual average of 50 weeks, paid or credited, reduced pension awarded for less coverage, earned income of widow(er) must not exceed minimum wage, Widows under age 60 with children under 16 qualify regardless of income | Benefit varies depending on whether contributions were made before or after Jan 22, 1979. Earnings related benefit which can be as much as Lm70.72/week are 5/9th yearly average of best 3 consecutive years of last 10 years before husband's death or retirement. Upon remarriage widow forfeits benefit from previous marriage and receives lump sum equal to 52 weeks pension |                          |   |
| Netherlands | Residents eligible. Payable to widow(er)/unmarried permanent partner   | Income tested for those born before 1950, those 45% disabled, 932.38 euros/month for those caring for child under 18, benefit reduced by survivor's income from employment. No benefits if income > 2002.54 euros/ month  |                          |   |
| Poland      | Deceased was a pensioner or met employment requirements for old age pension or disability benefits   | One survivor - 85% of deceased's pension, 2 survivors - 90%, 3 or more 95%  |                          |   |
| Portugal    | Deceased met pension requirements or was a pensioner   | 60% of insured's pension. Payable for 5 years only unless beneficiary over 35, disabled or caring for a child.  |                          |   |
| Romania     | Insured met pension requirements or was a pensioner at the time of death. Widows must fulfill certain age conditions and also duration of marriage requirements. No prior requirements if death was by work accident, occupational disease or tuberculosis             | Limited benefit paid for 6 months to low income spouse caring for child under 7 who does not meet eligibility conditions, 50% of deceased's old age pension, 2 survivors 75%, 3 or more 100%  |                          |   |

|                |   |   |   |  |
|----------------|---|---|---|--|
| Slovak R.      | Deceased met pension requirements or was a pensioner  | 60% of insured's pension payable to widows for 12 months, thereafter only to widow's aged 50, aged 45 if she has reared 2 or more children, aged 40 if husband died in occupational accident, any age if disabled, caring for a child or caring for 3 or more children, widowers pension 1977SK / month |   |  |
| Slovenia       | Deceased met pension (old age or disability) requirements or was a pensioner, had 5 years of coverage and contribution, widow(er) must be at least 52(53) in 2003 | 70% of insured's pension, 2 survivors - 80%, 3 survivors - 90%, 4 or more - 100%  |   |  |
| Spain          | Deceased had 500 days of contribution in the last 5 years, pensioner at time of death or had 15 years of contribution,  | 46% of either the deceased's or survivor's benefit base, whichever is higher, for income below a particular level - 50%, 70% if there are dependents  | Ex-spouse not eligible for old age pension once remarried unless 61+ at time of marriage, 65% disabled or survivor pension is 75% of pensioner's total income |  |
| Sweden         | Residents eligible. Deceased must be credited with pension points for at least 3 years or have 3 years coverage   | Benefit payable for 6 months if married or cohabiting for at least 5 years - under certain conditions. Payable for as long as living with child under 12. Special pension paid if unemployment or illness prevents self-support   |   |  |
| United Kingdom | Deceased met coverage requirements or was a pensioner   | Weekly allowance to those above 45 without dependent children payable for 52 weeks after death of spouse. Amount depends on age at widowhood. Widow aged 18-59 with dependent children gets weekly allowance of £53.05 + £31.45 to £32.25 for each child minus amount of other benefits/income          |   |  |

Sources: Social Security Programs throughout the world - Europe 2002.

**Table 6. Selected work arrangements in Europe, 1988 and 1998 (percent of total employment)**

| Country        | Total employment (000s) |                 | Self-employment<br>(including family workers) |             | Part-time employment |             | Temporary employment <sup>1</sup> |             |
|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------|---|-------------|----------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
|                | 1988                    | 1998            | 1988  | 1998        | 1988                 | 1998        | 1988                              | 1998        |
| Austria        | ..                      | 3,626           | ..  | 13.8        | ..                   | 15.8        | ..                                | 6.8         |
| Belgium        | 3,483                   | 3,857           | 18  | 17.4        | 9.8                  | 15.7        | 4.5                               | 6.4         |
| Denmark        | 2,683                   | 2,679           | 11  | 9.7         | 23.7                 | 22.3        | 10.2                              | 9.1         |
| Finland        | ..                      | 2,179           | ..  | 14.6        | ..                   | 11.7        | ..                                | 15.1        |
| France         | 21,503                  | 22,469          | 16.2  | 12.5        | 12                   | 17.3        | 6.6                               | 12.2        |
| Germany        | 26,999                  | 35,537          | 11.5  | 11          | 13.2                 | 18.3        | 10.1                              | 10.9        |
| Greece         | 3,651                   | 3,967           | 49.5  | 43.4        | 5.5                  | 6           | 8.8                               | 7.4         |
| Ireland        | 1,090                   | 1,496           | 25.3  | 20.2        | 8                    | 16.7        | 6.8                               | 6.1         |
| Italy          | 21,085                  | 20,357          | 29.5  | 28.7        | 5.6                  | 7.4         | 4.1                               | 6.1         |
| Luxembourg     | 152                     | 171             | 11.2  | 9.4         | 6.6                  | 9.4         | 3.3                               | 2.4         |
| Netherlands    | 5,903                   | 7,402           | 12.1  | 11.6        | 30.3                 | 38.8        | 7.7                               | 11.2        |
| Portugal       | 4,427                   | 4,764           | 30.9  | 28.2        | 6.5                  | 11.1        | 12.6                              | 12.4        |
| Spain          | 11,709                  | 13,161          | 29.1  | 23          | 5.4                  | 8.1         | 15.8                              | 25.3        |
| Sweden         | ..                      | 3,946           | ..  | 11.4        | ..                   | 23.9        | ..                                | 11.4        |
| United Kingdom | 25,660                  | 26,883          | 12.7  | 12.5        | 21.9                 | 24.9        | 5.2                               | 6.1         |
| <b>EU</b>      | <b>1,28,345</b>         | <b>1,52,494</b> | <b>19.1</b>                                   | <b>16.6</b> | <b>13.2</b>          | <b>17.4</b> | <b>7.8</b>                        | <b>10.6</b> |

Source: Holzmann (2001).

Notes : 1 - Dependent employees including apprentices, trainees, research assistants etc.

.. indicates data not available

**Table 7. Scope of funded pensions in EU and EUA countries around 2002**

| Country               | Mandated second pillar | Description  | Contribution rate | Share of covered LF as% | Funded pension as % of retirement income <sup>3</sup> | Funded pension assets as % of GDP |
|-----------------------|------------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Austria               | no                     | -  | -                 | -                       | Low   | 2.6                               |
| Belgium               | no                     | -  | -                 | -                       | 0.5   | 4.8                               |
| Bulgaria <sup>2</sup> | yes                    | Supplementary mandatory pension funds, not less than 50-100BGN for farmers and 200BGN for self-employed, max monthly income - 1000BGN, current contribution 2% but planned increase to 5%. No reserves                                     | 2% payroll        | 48.4                    | Close to nil  |                                   |
| Cyprus                | no                     | Supplementary earnings related contributions/benefits. Voluntary coverage for formerly covered persons and for Cypriots working abroad for Cypriot employers. Employer contributes 6.3% (voluntarily covered 10%), employee 6.3%, State 4% | -                 | -                       | Modest  |                                   |
| Czech R.              | no                     | -  | -                 | -                       | Low   | 3.4                               |
| Denmark               | yes                    | Privately administered defined contribution scheme, Civil service pension scheme for public sector employees - defined benefit   |                   | 82.0                    | 16.0  | 21.5                              |
| Estonia               | yes                    | Employer contributes 4%, employee 2% to funded system, no ceilings. Pension fund management companies maintain individual accounts and must make quarterly contributions to a guarantee fund.  | 6% payroll        | 60.0                    | Close to nil  | 0.13                              |
| Finland               | no                     | -  | -                 | -                       | 38.6  |                                   |
| France                | no                     | -  | -                 | -                       | Low   | 5.6                               |
| Germany               | no                     | -  | -                 | -                       | 13.0  | 3.3                               |
| Greece                | no                     | -  | -                 | -                       | Low   | 11.9                              |
| Hungary               | yes                    | Contribution to grow to 8% by 2004, employees' contribution ceiling 250% average wage in 2003, no ceilings on employer contribution, maintained as individual accounts, 0.4% of contributions go toward guarantee fund                     | 6% payroll        | 45.0                    | Low   | 5                                 |
| Ireland               | no                     | -  | -                 | -                       | High  |                                   |
| Italy                 | no                     | -  | -                 | -                       | 4.2   | 3.2                               |

|                          |     |   |  |       |              |      |
|--------------------------|-----|---|--|-------|--------------|------|
| Latvia                   | yes | Current contribution 2% but rate expected to increase to 9%, max income from which contributions are paid - 18400 LVL   | 2% payroll                                 | 72.0  |              | 0.4  |
| Lithuania                | no  | -   | -  | -     | Close to nil |      |
| Luxembourg               | no  | -   | -  | -     | Low          |      |
| Malta                    | no  | -   | -  | -     | Low          |      |
| Netherlands <sup>1</sup> | yes | Not mandatory but schemes set by industrial agreements, 95% of schemes are defined benefit. Occupational pensions integrated with public pension schemes.   | -  | 91.0  | 19.0         | 85.6 |
| Poland                   | yes | DC individual account schemes where employees chose the fund, Employees contribute half and not less than min wage, max for employers and employees 250% average wage (annually), guarantee fund - 0.1% pension assets - backed up with state budget guarantee. | 7.3% of total social security contribution | 70.0  | Low          | 3.0  |
| Portugal                 | no  | -   | -  | -     | Low          | 12.0 |
| Romania                  | no  | Partially legislated then questioned. Second pillar decided on principle. Adoption depends on future fiscal condition   | 8% payroll                                 | 75.0  | Close to nil |      |
| Slovak R.                | no  | -   | -  | -     | Close to nil | 1.0  |
| Slovenia                 | no  | -   | -  | -     | Close to nil | 0.0  |
| Spain                    | no  | -   | -  | -     | Low          | 2.1  |
| Sweden                   | yes | Premium Pension authority maintains the individual accounts of the system. Workers chose from several hundred privately managed funds for investment of their capital.  | 2.5% payroll                               | 100.0 | Moderate     | 32.6 |
| United Kingdom           | yes | Mandatory pension component covers defined benefit and defined contribution schemes. Some components run by state, some by employers and some by financial services companies.  | 17.5%-40% earnings - varies with age       |       | High         | 83.7 |

Sources: OECD 2000, World Bank Pensions dataset 2003, Luxembourg Income Study 2003, Complementary and Private Pensions 2003, Deutsches Institut für Altersvorsorge GmbH 1999, Blommestein 2000, Whitehouse 2001, Palmer 2000, Whitehouse 2000, Ministry of Social Affairs, Denmark 2002, Holzmann et al 2003, Chlon-Dominczak A. 2003.

Notes: 1 - Second pillar in Netherlands is quasi-mandatory, based on collective labor contracts. Data on pension as % retirement income not available so capital income as % of retirement income has been used.

2- For Bulgaria the share of LF column gives data on proportion of participants in funded systems as % of total contributors.

3- Includes total population as specific data for age group 65+ is not available. In the qualitative and author-based assessment close to nil refers to > 1%, low to 1% - 5%, moderate to 5% - 15%, and high to < 15% of funded pension income in retirement income of current population.

- indicates not applicable

**Table 8. Scope and form of Social Pensions in EU and EUA countries around 2002**

| Country  | General   | Eligibility   | Nationality/residency requirements  | Benefits   | % Share of elderly (65+) <sup>1</sup> | Social assistance expenditure as % of GDP | Comments   |
|----------|---|---|---|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Austria  | General Assistance, Supplementary pensions, Minimum pension of 630.92 euros for an individual | General assistance covers those unable to maintain minimum standard of living and age > 19. Older people (above retirement age) whose insurance pensions are below minimum qualify for supplements. | Must be resident, EU nationals or recognized refugees, some provinces require Austrian nationality  | Income-tested allowance maintains minimum level of pension   | 6.7                                   | 0.2                                       | Supplements for minimum pension level in all schemes. Social assistance for those without coverage under earnings-related pension. |
| Belgium  | General Assistance, guaranteed income for old, Minimum pension                                | All citizens in need, age > 18 qualify for general assistance. Older people (women 60, men 65) who can't maintain minimum standard of living eligible for guaranteed income scheme                  | General assistance: those registered, some restrictions on foreigners. Guaranteed income: Belgium or EU citizens plus resident for 5 years before claim or 10 years during lifetime | Minimum pension of 9253.11 euros/year for a single person fully insured. Means-tested allowance of 7022.70 euros/year for a single person. |                                       | 0.7                                       |  |
| Bulgaria | Social pension  |   |   | Flat rate of 44 leva/month   |                                       |   |  |
| Cyprus   | Social pension  | Those 65+ and not entitled to pension or similar payment from other sources. Lump sum payment to those aged 68 who did not meet contribution conditions for pension                                 | 20 years of residency after age 40 or 35 years after 18   | Lump sum payment of 15% of total earnings. Social pension is 133.63 pounds a month   |                                       |   |  |
| Czech R. | Minimum pension   |   |   | 2080 CZK/month   | 0.2                                   |   |  |
| Denmark  | Non-contributory supplementary pensions scheme  | People with low pensions rights. Payable at age 67  | Residents of Denmark. EU citizens and recognized refugees given temporary help for 3 years until resident   | Income tested supplement of 4406 kroner/month  |                                       | 1.4                                       |  |
| Estonia  |   |   |   |  | 2.6                                   |   |  |
| Finland  | Living allowance  | Those who have no other source of income. Minimum age 18  | Residents, registered by municipality   |  |                                       | 1.1                                       |  |



|            |  |   |   |   |     |     |   |
|------------|--|---|---|---|-----|-----|---|
| France     | General assistance, benefits for elderly plus supplements to guarantee minimum income, Minimum pension | People ineligible for other benefits, age > 25, benefits for elderly for people aged 65+ with low pension income or no pension  | French and EU nationals   | Minimum pension calculated at 50%, not less than 6307.62 euros/year. Coverage for 150 quarters. Minimum reduced depending on length of coverage             |     | 2.0 |   |
| Germany    | General assistance, Basic security benefit   | Those with insufficient income to meet needs eligible for assistance. Security benefits for those 65+ (even if not eligible for old-age pension) and those 18+ with permanent reduction in earnings capacity, not eligible if held responsible for own situation. | Residents. Restrictions for non-Germans including refugees                            | General assistance is means-tested. Basic security benefit includes payment for housing and health care.  |     | 2.3 | Includes supplementary benefits for old age   |
| Greece     | Assistance to old and needy, Minimum pension, Dependent's supplements                                  | Older people aged 65+ without adequate social cover and those in need with no social security cover.  | Citizens who are permanent residents. Refugees and asylum seekers with permit to stay | Minimum pension of 360 euros/month plus 26.99 for non-working wife or dependent disabled husband, 17.98 for each child                                      |     | 0.1 | Benefits to older people without medical care and minimum pension. Lump sum paid to economically weak.  |
| Hungary    |  |   |   |   |     |     |   |
| Ireland    | Supplementary allowance, Old age non-contributory pension  | Older people 66+ with limited means, people with exceptional needs  | Residents. Restrictions on refugees and asylum seekers                                | Up to 134 euros/week depending on means test plus 88.5 for adult dependents, 16.8 for each child  | 8.7 | 5.1 |   |
| Italy      | Social assistance, Social pension, Social allowance  | All living independently eligible for assistance. Social pension for those 65+. Older people not eligible for social pension - social allowance, minimum pension  | Residence in municipality, legal residents in Italy, EU citizens                      | Min pension is 392.69 euros/ month. Social allowance is 3775.83 euros/year. For those 70 + with income < 6714 euros/year may get up to 516.46 euros/ month. |     | 1.3 | Social allowance scheme replaced Social pension in 1996. No new claimants for Social pension since 1996 |
| Latvia     | Minimum pension  |   |   | 30 lats/ month  |     |     |   |
| Lithuania  | Basic pension  |   |   | 110% of poverty level   |     |     |   |
| Luxembourg | Income support benefit, Minimum pension  | All above 30 years, at least 20 years coverage for minimum pension  | Resident for 10 years out of last 20. Registered with local authority.                |   |     | 0.5 |   |
| Malta      |  |   |   |   |     |     |   |

|                |   |  |  |   |     |     |  |
|----------------|---|--|--|---|-----|-----|--|
| Netherlands    | General assistance, Income tested supplementary allowance for old       | All above 18 years   | Residents. Non-citizens covered only if special agreements exist   | Supplementary allowance reduced by 2% for each unexcused year of non-contribution.              |     | 2.2 |  |
| Poland         | Minimum pension   |  |  | Minimum pension 530.26 zlotys/month   |     |     |  |
| Portugal       | Guaranteed minimum income, Social pension, Social supplement to pension | Guaranteed income for those in economic need. Social pension for older people(65+) not covered by any other social security scheme. Social supplement to pensioners whose contributions insufficient to generate minimum pension | Nationals and EU citizens. 6 months residency requirements for stateless and refugees.                             | Social pension is 138.27 euros/ month   |     | 0.5 |  |
| Romania        |   |  |  |   |     |     |  |
| Slovak R.      | Minimum pension   |  |  | 550 koruna/month  |     |     |  |
| Slovenia       |   |  |  |   |     |     |  |
| Spain          | Minimum income scheme, Social pension                                   | Minimum income scheme for low income working age households. Social pension for those 65+ without insurance pension  | 1 year residency requirement for minimum income. 10 years residency including 2 preceding claim for Social pension | Minimum pension is 385.50 euros/month (for those aged 65), reduced minimum pension for those<65 | 1.6 | 1.1 |  |
| Sweden         | Social welfare allowance, Guarantee pension                             | People who have no other means of support. Also serves as a supplement to people claiming social security benefits   | Residents  |   |     | 1.2 |  |
| United Kingdom | Income support benefit  | All excluding unemployed. Income must be below certain level. Not payable if savings are over £8000 or if working more than 16 hours a week  | Residents only unless under EU regulations or refugee. Restrictions apply depending on immigration status          | Depends on age, income, circumstances. £92.15 a week minus other income for a single person.    |     | 4.2 | Non- contributory means tested social assistance |

Sources: Social Security Pensions edited by Gillion C. , Turner J., Bailey C., Latulippe D., 2000, Social Security Programs Throughout the World 2002, Trends in Social Security 2003 Notes: 1 - Social assistance recipients as a proportion of total aged population