

SIIAEC

Secrétariat International des
Ingénieurs, Agronomes et Cadres
Économiques Catholiques

International Secretariat for Catholic
Engineers, Agronomists and
Industry Officials

A special secretariat of Pax Romana MIIC / ICMICA - Mouvement International des Intellectuels Catholiques / The International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs

General Assembly of SIIAEC

from Friday, 14th to Sunday, 16th October 2005

in Bratislava, Slovakia

**Family – Economy – Europe
Economy – favourable for families !?**

Documentation

Vienna, December 2005

Programme:

Friday, 14th October

- | | |
|---|---------|
| • Welcome and registration | 18.00 h |
| • Evening meal | 19.00 h |
| • What is going on in my country? / Presentations / | 20.00 h |

Saturday, 15th October

- | | |
|--|---------|
| • Meditation, prayer | 7.30 h |
| • Breakfast | 8.00 h |
| • Welcome, and short introduction in the study session | 9.00 h |
| • Pavol Kováč - Anna Kováčová / Slovakia,
"The problems of families in communist and in post-communist period" | 9.15 h |
| • Terézia Lenczová / Slovakia /,
"From family originates, the prosperity of a society." | 9.55 h |
| • Break | 10.35 h |
| • Mária Glasová / Slovakia /,
"Bright spots and shadows for the family today." | 10.50 h |
| • Helmuth Schattovits / Austria,
former head of the "Institut für Ehe und Familie",
"Economics and family in the different industrialized societies" | 11.30 h |
| • Discussion | 12.15 h |
| • Lunch 13.00 h | |
| • Discussion and programme prepared by young professionals | 14.00 h |
| • Meditation, prayer | 18.00 h |
| • Evening meal | 19.00 h |
| • Conversation, exchange of ideas, experiences. | 20.00 h |

Sunday, 16th October

- | | |
|--|---------|
| • Holy Mass | 8.00 h |
| • Breakfast | 9.00 h |
| • SIIAEC programme /statutory session/: | 9.45 h |
| - Presentation and confirmation of the new Secretary Theo Quendler. | |
| - Information of Pax Romana about the new leading team, /update the PR homepage/, contribution to PR activities. | |
| - SIIAEC homepage | |
| - Young professional activities | |
| - Finances | |
| - Subject of the next assembly, preparation by SIIAEC mail | |
| • Summary, end of the meeting | 12.30 h |
| • Lunch and Goodbyes | 13.00 h |

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Pavol Kováč and Anna Kováčová, Bratislava

The problems of families in communist and in post-communist period (shortened version)

Mr. Kováč is father of a Slovak family with more than five children (8 boys). His job is researcher in the field of material science and his wife is doctor of medicine specialized in children's psychiatry. In his contribution he wanted to analyse shortly the situation of families in the past years, especially to compare their situation before and after 1989.

They have a very nice old national story titled "Three groshes". (A grosh was a low value coin of an old currency.) The story tells about a man building up the road and working very hard the whole day breaking stones. When one day, somebody observing him asked about his salary, he answered, that he earned three groshes. Question: How can you live with only three groshes? He answered: That I gave back one, lent another one and use only one by myself. Furthermore he explained: That the given back is for my father, and the lent one for my son. This story shows a nice example of solidarity between the generations and also a school example for the future, if the number of children will go further down so dramatically.

"Kingdom of atheist ideology"

In communist time, family, which was economically independent, keeping the moral order and spirit values was not acceptable for the regime, which was based on atheism, class-war, lying and terror. Therefore they took the ground of the farmers (which means from most of the families in that time) very cruelly by so-called "*collectivization of agriculture*" and made many actions with the aim to unbent the mothers and fathers of families from their right mission in family. This system wanted to re-educate women to their new mission of a "socialist mother", who will give her children with pleasure to nurseries, schools, to the army, ... and so on and help responsibly building communism.

A very strong cut to the family life was the abortion law (year ...?). Mothers were taught the most drastic contraception by killing their own children given the refined name "breaking of pregnancy". This law led to abortion records in Catholic Slovakia and to an apparent decrease of born children as well.

As a consequence more than two children can be found mostly in Christian families and families of gypsies. While the major motivation for Christian husbands is the high value of life coming from God, gypsies were carried mostly by their natural character and also by economic reasons. Communist government supported families giving them a so called "children allowance". Though this allowance was not high, it could reach a considerable amount for gypsies and families that usually don't work hard and live on a relatively low level, if the number of children ranged from five to ten or more. Such rules in family politics helped gypsies to live their living style nearly "without work". Another support for families as a whole was realized by the free of charge schools, medical treatment, sport and culture. For the "average" family it was much easier than now to arrange a flat or to build a family house. There was no unemployment, which had a positive effect on family life. But, frequently, the same salary was paid for hard working and a lazy person, which introduced a lot of injustices.

On the other hand, communist system tried to prevent any extra activities, e.g. carrying some business and especially all actions connected with the church (teaching of catechism, meetings of young people, spiritual literature ... and any kind of spirit actions). Therefore, the Christian families interested in spiritual life had usually contacts with underground church, which was sometimes dangerous. Communists persecuted many families or some of their persons due to religion. Also children in schools were subjected to variable discriminations and irony. Government strongly controlled each contact with abroad and tried to prevent the penetration of any kind of literature except of technical one. On the other hand, by this way it "indirectly protected" the young people from various sects, immoral and hedonist motions (e.g. pornography) and so on. (Sometimes Mr. Kováčs would like to say: "Thank you for that ... red brothers").

"Kingdom of money"

After the political change (15 years ago), they were happy especially by the liberty after 40 years of living in the Soviet empire. A lot of possibilities have been obtained due to the freedom in movement and press, open frontier, liberty in business enterprise, democracy and so on. Now, they have many possibilities to collaborate with their colleagues, friends and also families living in all European countries. Witness of faith, mutual assistance, encouragements and experiences from the East and West side of European people are really stimulating and giving hope for the future. Very important and valuable for them is the freedom of church allowing them to have their hierarchy, access to doctrine, possibility of children education in church schools, contacts with the church motions in other countries and so on.

On the other hand, "*the kingdom of money*" started to dominate and all moral waste had a free way to their society. Materialism of today's west Europe is incomparable to those of communists' time. Practical hedonism is spread together with sexual liberty and perversion. TV is emitting a huge amount of stupid films, stories and programs, which are as modern weapons firing to family (and church as well) and also to everybody who wants to help them. Family destruction has really bad consequences, how Mr. Kováčs is frequently told by his wife after work at a children's clinic of psychiatry. Family background is usually the reason for most of unsociable behaviour, the use of drugs or many suicides of children. He cites the words of the psychiatrist Dr. Megglé: "*The today's society is organizing through the laws its own disorganisation*". Family breakdown is already systematically organized today. He (Dr. Megglé) describes it *as something more momentous than diabolism, because it is in the air which we inhale every day...* *Community is daily contributing to the breakdown, producing handicapped people and on the other hand asking the psychiatrist to heal them. Community urgently needs to form the public privity that future is coming through the family and that the basic social problems have roots also there. If the woman will not fulfil her social function of mother, the crisis will increase. Who wants to help seriously, has to follow the call of J.P.II., "All forces for help to family."* (Dr. Megglé)

Economically, the government does not support families as before. The children allowance is considerable smaller, which results in really poorness of gypsy like families and also in some kind of discrimination of many children facilities as a whole, because they are judged by the same way. For example, the tax depreciation applied maximally to four children, the level of so called "material misery" is 8.000 Sk for any family (one child or ten children) and so on. The discrimination of mothers bringing up and educating children is also apparent. Their work at home and many years with children are not

appreciated and in comparison to women without children (or only one or two) building mostly their professional rise, they will obtain much lower pension. The usual public opinion is that children are an expensive matter for the society as well as for the family, which would like to spend its money for its enjoyment. Christian families are not motivated by children allowance, but, also economic problems, mainly unemployment and more expensive flats and houses (needed for any family) play an important role. Not negligible are the costs for a family for school and cultural education now. Therefore, the economy of a family of many children is more complicated. Mr. Kováč is not an economist and especially he doesn't like to use money to consider the matters of life ... Sometime, he reminds the words of St. Paul: "You buy as if you do not buy ..." His personal experience from his ten-person-family is that some level of poorness can even be a "good teacher" for life. It can help children to solidarity, initiative in the study and work and so on.

What we see now is that our young families are more and more influenced by economy, which is of course a logical consequence of today's situation, public opinion. Fertility index fell down to 1.5 in 2002 (similar or even lower as in other European countries), which means that his country does not reach the reproduction level needed for the renewal of generations.

What about the family future?

Slovak families have been subjected to several political and economic transformations with variable ideological and economic pressures in the past decades. Somebody can conclude that their country is lay-wasted by atheism with several generations educated without belief and influenced by practical materialism and consuming society today. The transition from the kingdom of "ideology" to the kingdom of "money" is quite a strong change and can also be considered as a destruction for the family. They had and also do have real attacks to the family, which is sometimes very refined. There is the question: Was the attack to the family more dangerous at the time of communism or is it more destructive now? It is not easy to answer...

Everybody (who is thinking) knows that the family is the basic cell of any society, but not too many people go into the consequences "What would it be like if this cell will be deformed or destroyed?" It seems that the society is only interested in itself, in today's needs, and the future is not concerned. The motivation or the hierarchy of values is decisive for each man and woman living in common in family as husband and wife. This is of course influenced by a lot of factors: 1) the style of life in their previous family, 2) the religion, 3) the economic demands/total receipts, we have described.

In any case it is needed to be emphasized that any child needs the father and mother, and the parents are the first persons responsible for the mental health and the natural evolution of the child. Each child has the right of individual education, which cannot be replaced by any kind of collective care. One interesting example of a statistics of may 2004 is: Prof. Matulníkom – *zborník z konferencie "Rodinná politika v SR po vstupe do EÚ"* (SSPRZR, máj 2004): Approximately one half of the Slovak inhabitants agreed having more children if the care for them would be accepted as a profession, if the maternity leave would be payed reasonably (e.g. on the level of minimum salary) and if the potential parents would not be afraid of unemployment or incapability to give an adequate education (knowledge) to their children.

If the family problems are not solved, proportionally social problems and significant imbalance (e.g. in health service; what is more important: Social health or health?) will grow. There are voices of some intellectuals and economists speaking about the "tyranny of money, media and mind" and about the need for "re-conceptual" work.

From the other point of view, Slovak families give hope due to the still appreciated value of family life and also due to characteristic fidelity to church and to the Holy Father. Family there is more compact than in the western part of Europe. There is still a "healthful seed" sustained and families with many children are living and giving the mission to their children. Their church has a clear doctrine for family and they are teaching also from the problems existing in "economically more developed" western countries. Instead of this, new movements and actions in church try to reinforce the family.

Finally some visions of Don Bosco who had a dream and who saw the church as a boat with the Holy Father floating into the port between two columns representing the Eucharist and our Lady – helper of Christians. He saw a strong war against this floating boat by weapons as newspapers or journals, so something reminding "today's weapons" – modern media (TV, internet...). Mr. Kováč believes that similarly as in the case of small boats in Don Bosco's dream connected to a big one representing the Church, which will reach the port safely, also their families connected to church, reinforced by Eucharist and with the help of Our Lady will never die.

Terezia Lenczová. Bratislava
Slovak Society for Family and Responsible Parenthood

From family originates the prosperity of a society (short version)

The aim of the presentation is to show that the institute of family generates unique performance both for individuals and the society. This is possible, if communities and families are in good relationship to each other: *"Knowing the principles of origins and development of family life, each community should provide cultural, political and economic prerequisites that would permit, preferably all families, to be what they are called to be: Community of love and life"*. (Encyclica Familiaris Consortio)

1) The biblical background.

My attention was attracted by the sequences of steps that message presented about man, woman, marriage, and family:

+ So God created human beings, making them to be like himself: He created them male and female.(Gn 1,27) The message is: Human beings, men and women, were called for love the way God's love is, uniting, faithful and lasting love. (See Mt. 19.4-6)

In case they fail, there is always a victim, many families in divorce prove it.

+ in the next verse God blessed men and women and gave them fertility in order to accomplish their task to fill the earth.(Gn 1, 38a) In case couples refuse it to have more comfort, they get poorer, loose wealth of relationship, they get lonely when aged.

+ In Gn1, 28b-30 God puts human beings in charge of animals and plants, to control the whole planet, in order to guarantee their lives and those of their descendents.

Nowadays people concentrate more on increasing comfort instead of working for bringing up a reasonable number of children.

2) Family as a relatively autonomous entity.

What is a family? The biblical family means father, mother and children, the "nuclear" family. The enlarged family covers also other relatives living in the same household. The reality of separations and divorces shows other forms of "families" living together in a household. Therefore modern statistics tend to use the concept of "household", in which men, women, children of different age and family relationships live together sharing the same household.

+ Family as an economic entity: It must cover its needs, visible within the budget, influenced by the number of children, the date of their birth, mother's employment, care for the children.

+ Decisions about resources and expenses don't depend only on economic aspects.

Experiences of families with many children show that preference given to other than economic criteria can be very reasonable. To cover primary interests of the children facilitates peaceful coexistence and stabilized family relationship, which may reduce costs in the future.

+ Family autonomy strongly depends on the structure of the state. Communist governments tried to cover the minimum economic requirements but on the other hand tried to monopolize the education of children beginning from young age.

+ Families are able to a certain extent to stabilize external influence and at the same moment they are stabilizing the society.

+ Families need the principle of subsidiary guaranteeing their autonomy to be responsible of assuring the needs of every day life and by networking within their environment.

Therefore:

It is very important to promote the internal family stability, cohesion and solidarity in the spirit of subsidiary principle.

Hannelore Hoensch, German family minister, stated in her book *"Familien im wiedervereinigten Deutschland"*, 1990:

"Families are individual communities bringing together several generations. They are not independent in our world of labour division, legal arrangements and dense settlement, but they are definitely responsible for themselves. Families want to make independent decisions about their life style and their life arrangements. They do not want to be told what to do, they do not want just to be used as a tool for accomplishment of national economic and ideological aims."

3) Families with children contribute to the social system development.

+ Family is an important consumption unit.

Consumption feedback by families is dynamizing production, influencing it to cover real needs and not only for profit (weapons, drugs etc). Consumers are able to influence the market by choosing carefully what they are buying. High income groups are able to apply high level criteria. The demand of families for new products and their buying power are extremely important for manufacturers and distributors. Families are significant partners of them.

+ Family as a production unit:

Household work generally is not considered as economic activity, but it really is: It saves expenses: Elder family members and child care, preparing of food, looking for clothes, sanitary needs, buying and repairing of all sorts of equipment etc. This kind of work is regarded as second class activity: *"She stays at home and takes care of the children"* was a statement of communist propaganda against private children caring, but it is also used with a negative touch in western countries.

The "output" of an effective child care are well educated young citizens, useful for society.

The growing number of young people from broken families prove, that stable families save to communities a lot of expenses.

To make family activities visible on the market it would be necessary to specify their contribution to the GDP. It has been examined for example family activity with similar services done by paid work in order to find a way to introduce a fair parenthood benefit to improve the economic situation of parents with children.

+ Family as a source of income for the state budget:

Parents have a strong motivation to work hard to cover the needs of their family, which increases economic activity. They care for children, who are the employees and tax payers of coming years.

On the other side families are disadvantaged twice:

- Lower standard of living, lower chance of career of the parents,
- smaller pensions because of less years of service and lower salaries.

In Slovakia especially Christian politicians try to improve the situation of families by preparing new laws.

+ Family as a source of human potential:

Stable families are source of human potential and values, indispensable for social development. Everyday life in families needs love, to give and to take love, building up relationship. Other social communities must replace it by solidarity, collaboration and mutual responsibility.

The core of marital relationship is exclusivity and permanence, which gives beauty to various expressions of love and sexuality and gives capacity to bear big burden.

For children it is very important to be accepted by their parents without any condition, just as they are, which is a source of confidence. Development of a stable personality needs good relationship between parents and a relation of love to the children.

In families children have the chance to acquire cultural, spiritual values and social skills.

The presence of senior family members is an important lesson of solidarity and life, it makes sensible for old-age sense and gives strength to cope with its unpleasant side.

The wealth of relationship makes family a source of creative, personality-integrating human potential.

If families don't succeed to live in harmony, the community has to bear an additional burden to look after people with problems caused by troubled families.

All family members have a natural desire for relationships typical for sound families. That is what dreams of children from children homes expressed, and what was also stated by psychologists of children, by experts in life-value research of young people, divorce archives and by testimonies of senior citizens in nursing homes.

To conclude this chapter: Family is the source of human assets - if it is sound and open to life. It is necessary to establish laws and prerequisites under which families are capable of social reproduction and sustainable social development.

4.) Prosperity comes from family, but there are obstacles...

+ The labour market wants men and women to be available in terms of time and room, free from bonds, even - or especially - free from family bonds, whenever their performance is needed. Availability of workers and employees in time and space may severely interfere with family life. Labour market refuses labour with maternal responsibilities - paternal ones are usually not mentioned.

And yet, those responsibilities are indispensable in certain life stages of the children. The labour market needs physically, psychologically and morally consolidated labour, capable

of creative work, collaboration and open for new knowledge, exactly what families are the source of.

Objectively, there is a tension between the labour market and family. But at the same time they need each other. For that reason, it is necessary to search for and to develop such frameworks and specific conditions of the market and such ways of family behaviour, which may minimize these adverse effects.

On the other hand, parents have to face the challenge of giving preference to spending more time with their children at their young age and give up certain legitimate demands as to the standard of living.

Unemployment is a threat to family and excessive employment alike. Family finds itself under pressure - for the sake of the career of one or both parents, the child may become an obstacle instead of a gift.

This issue has to be solved by social dialogue between employers and employees, between law-makers and citizens, and by awareness campaigns targeted at youth, the potential parents, and especially at parents of young children.

Of the **many international documents** let us mention just the following two:

European Commission Document "**Employment and taking care of children - implementation of Council of Europe recommendations**" (edited in the eighties of the past century), and

International Labour Organization Convention Nr.156 of 1981 concerning "**Equal opportunities and equal treatment of male and female workers with family responsibilities**".

+ Families - target of unrestrained consumerism:

Norbert Wiener, the founder of system theory, stated about family: "*Family, with its internal rules and sanctions, is the only institution able to resist the enticement of consumerism*".

The world of commercials seems to know that and tries to break that barrier with all sorts of tricks and creative marketing. Is it good or bad?

People like to compare their standard of living with the standard of the neighbour, at work, in the media; the children at school. In many cases parents join the "rat race" of standard and try to earn more, which reduces free time for communication with the children.

5) Family rights.

After the Synod of the catholic bishops in 1980 the Holy See addressed a Charter of the Family to all people, institutions and governments, involved in the role of family in modern world, issued on October 22nd 1983. Para 3 and 8-11 out of the 12 paragraphs defined rights of the family refer to economic aspects of the family.

SIIAEC – Meeting Bratislava-Dubravka
14. - 16. October 2005

ECONOMICS AND FAMILY

in the differentiated and individualized societies

by the example of Austria¹

Helmuth Schattovits

Short version

Economics and family determine the everyday life, but also the life concepts of humans substantially. Since the 90's the depending on each other is increasingly discussed in public and science. Those positions, which demand that the economy should orient itself more at the necessities of families, get more important.² Fortunately - in Austria however - the economy accepts this challenge at least as a friendly first sign, at one hand because of the fundamental responsibility for humans and society, on the other hand because of economical considering. So a set of measures were taken by enterprises concerning family-friendly working sphere and/or compatibility of family and occupation.³

These efforts on the "micro level" are undoubtedly of central importance. There are various publications and documentations on this topic. This view is not sufficient however. Also sustainable measures on the macro level are required, in particular the compensation of the specific services. That will be the emphasis of my remarks. In addition, beside the state the civil society is demanded. I will show an example of such a commitment on the example of a concrete living project. I will introduce with some preface and close with a short summary.

I regard value-rational arguments as primary arguments and purpose rational ones as secondary.

1 Introductory remarks

These also have the function to make explicit some facts and prerequisites, which are behind my concept.

- ❖ Sustainable change: "marriage and family" are not longer a matter of course but one of several options;
- ❖ At the same time we are convinced, that family still represents a value as such (!), but also provides still indispensable services.

¹ In individual indicators there are clear differences between (groups) European states, in the basic tendency exists a certain agreement.

² Of central importance is the 5. Deutscher Familienbericht (DFB) Die Zukunft des Humanvermögens zu; Humanvermögen umfasst Daseins- und Fachkompetenz; Bonn 1994, S 26 ff

³ So e.g. in Austria: Awarding of family-friendly enterprises, audit family and occupation as a basis of certifying of enterprises, family alliance, a union of enterprises, interest groups and regional/federal administrative authorities in order to promote the request.

2 Compensations for work of social relevance

2,1 Changes of the 3-generation-“contract”

One result of the important change is that compensation of costs and benefits between the generations and gender cannot primarily take place within the traditional family system any longer. (fig. 2)

Children as potential source of economical stability and social security of families have become an endangerment of poverty. Therefore the provision system has become a part of the public obligations of high developed states. The respective earning generation nowadays pays about half of its earned income in the form of taxes and deliveries to the public. This finances among other things the pensions (22.8 % of the wages) and a subsidy by the federal budget at an amount of some €-billions. For the maintenance and care costs of children it contributes rather little (4.5 % of the total wages). Remarkable costs are left for earning generation, being mothers and fathers. It's the state, which profits from the adult children to a large extent.

2,2 Household incomes during the life process

A view of longitudinal section clarifies the above statement of cross section view, that fundamental measures are necessary by the state in the sense of a secondary distribution of income, just in the social situation of various ways of life and processes of life. Look at the following sketch. (fig. 3)

Whereas the purchasing power of a household without children rises continuously till pension (blue line), it decreases sustainable as soon as the household cares for a child (red line) or costs for the external care reduce the available income. The loss remains still in the pension.

2,3 Compensations as a necessary third approach

About the fact of the problem we find political consensus, differences exist concerning the solutions and measures taken against. Some considerations: (fig. 4)

- The current discussion is dominated by the insurance principle in connection with paid work - frequently it is even regarded as the only possibility, to acquire payment and claims individually and compensate so the loss of purchasing power. This position remains in the reductionistic understanding of work as paid work and leaves other work of social relevance unconsidered. Thus the multiple burden of parents versus childless women and men is promoted. In this approach possible time for substantial social activities is systematically bound for earning one's living.
- People, who were not or are not able to participate in the earning process, are at best referred to the systems of social welfare service despite of substantially work of social relevance. The latter serve as safety net for humans, who cannot provide for themselves for a certain time or to some extent. It must be regarded roughly inequitable to position services of such social relevance as care of children into the range of welfare service. Because caring persons, e.g. mothers and fathers, are not limited in their efficiency, on the contrary they provide considerable services for humans and society.
- the new situations as result of the change require for new approach: Achievement compensation, as the third principle.

It concerns thereby compensation for work of social relevance. A person, who furnishes such achievements, acquires thereby claims, independently of its gainful employment or financial situation. The achievement balance principle makes it possible to earn payment and social security also outside of the paid job market. A so-called participation income

(Atkinson) differ from citizen's income (basic income according to the welfare service principle) evenly from acknowledgment of the participation in a socially relevant achievement - to care of children, nursing for the sick u.ae.⁴

Thus individual sense giving and social security do not primarily need to be found in each life situation by the paid job market.

2,4 The concept of the family achievement compensation fund (FLEF)

In the light of the above mentioned social change, where a matter of course becomes an option, the idea of achievement compensation is most important. The basic condition affects the possibility of realizing e.g. the child desire substantially. If we want to create equal chances for this life concept, it applies to develop existence further and set new initiatives.

The FLEF should notice three fields: Generally preventive, individually helping and supporting services.⁵

- **General preventive measures**

General in the sense, that all children will benefit in the same way and preventively, because they prevent social unfairness with regard to the future. The core of such general measures are:

- + Family-allowance – it supports the maintenance costs of the children
- + Child-care voucher - current preliminary stage is the child-care allowance - as contribution for the acknowledgement of the maintaining and care achievement for children; in addition to this coupon system, claims for pension, health insurance u.ae.

- **Specific measures - individually helping**

These measures are being granted if a support of the family becomes necessary according to personal circumstances

- + Direct fight against poverty in individual cases – e.g. family subsidies according to the per-head-income with the direct goal of the decrease of still existing family poverty in the concrete individual case.
- + Acute crisis intervention – e.g. hardship compensation with the primary goal to reduce the difficulties of the current crisis situation.
- + Advance payments - granting of credit e.g. maintenance advance, in order to relieve the caring person of the troubles of bringing in.

- **Structural supporting services**

Beside the direct also indirect measures are necessary, which can be regarded as structurally supporting services. They lie within the range of: Consultations - formation of the parents -evaluation and family research- family organizations, protection of interests, etc.

⁴ Atkinson, A.B. (1996): The Case for a Participation Income. In: The Political Quarterly, Vol. 67, Iss.1, p 67-70

⁵ The meaning of the differentiation confirms the discussion between the authors of the German child report and the Secretary of Family Affairs at that time: First referred to the increasing poverty endangerment of children according to the increasing number at children as people on social security. The minister held out the fact that the social welfare assistance prevents poverty and these children therefore may not be called poor.

2,5 Child-care voucher concept⁶ (Kinderbetreuungsscheck - KBS)

Since the year 2002 in Austria the child-care allowance ("Kinderbetreuungsgeld" - KBG) had come into force. Thus the family policy took up the challenge of the change⁷: the child with its demand and need was placed into the centre and the work of social relevance of child-caring was also concretely generally recognized and paid off to a small extent. With it one reacts appropriately to the variety of the life situation of families and one makes possible the freedom of election concerning looking after from the beginning. The KBS provides beyond the KBG a financial support until to the end of first class of the elementary school. Up to the completed fourth year of age money is paid off. In the following "kindergarten phase" the money is split: A coupon in the value of a half day external care and a money support too. The coupon is not removable in money, but can be taken in payment only by recognized external care persons and/or institutions. By the coupon system the past promotional praxis is changed: Not object promotion but subject promotion becomes effective as design principle. That means purchasing power is created among the parents for care of children and not carriers are subsidized. That changes the position of parents: They can appear as customers and not as asking plates.

In the first year of the elementary school half of the money is supported.

3 New kind of solidarity residential arrangements⁸

The self-help function of the family is impaired by the social change - e.g. structural by substantial reduction that person variety in the household -. This disadvantage can be diminished by a families and social network of communication and co-operation. Fortunately there are various initiatives and concrete models of new solidarity residential arrangements. For time reasons I can bring only one example. I selected this project, because I have with it more than 20 year life experience.

B.R.O.T. – an example for a solidarity residential arrangement

The B.R.O.T. community⁹ is one way of living in social and familial relationships. It is a non-profit association that constructed a residential home in Vienna's 17th district. The association held its constituent assembly in January 1987. It found interested parties by distributing pamphlets, advertising and passing on the information by word of mouth. Membership in the association is limited to adults so as not to force children into membership; it goes without saying that the children can live in their parents' household. In addition, each family is given a total of one extra vote for its children. The inhabitants moved into the home in May 1990.

The association wishes to enable life in a community based on a Christian spirit that is also conducive to rendering social services. It does not offer such specialised services as therapies but wants to provide mutual help through the specific way its members live their everyday lives. It also serves as a passage to an independent life for people who have experienced difficulties or are in a difficult situation. The services are rendered by the members themselves and not by employed staff.

The inhabitants are characterised by a mix of age groups and mental, cultural and physical conditions; they comprise families as well as singles who live there permanently or for limited periods of time. Old and young, healthy and ill, poor and rich people want to share joy and sorrow with one another, while fully respecting the privacy of the individual, marriage and family.

⁶ Schattovits, H. (Hg) (2000): Kinderbetreuungsscheck: Modellentwicklung und Analysen, Schriftenreihe des Österreichischen Institutes für Familienforschung (ÖIF), Heft 9, Wien

⁷ A parallel can be manufactured to 1993 the introduced federal care money.

⁸ Klar, S., Schattovits, H.: Integratives Wohnen als soziales Dienstangebot und Integratives Wohnen – Umsetzung einer sozialen Innovation, Forschungsbericht Band 1 und 2, Wien 1987 u. 1992

⁹ The individual letters of the German acronym "B.R.O.T." stand for Beten (=praying), Reden (=talking to each other), Offensein (=being open), and Teilen(=sharing). The term "B.R.O.T." as such means "bread".

The residential home in Vienna Geblergasse 17 is not only a sociological but also an architectural innovation. A column design was chosen to ensure flexibility concerning the layout of the flats. In fact, during the first nine years, the size of the flats was actually altered in three cases. The useful area is around 1,770 m² for a total of 25 flats: 18 for members and 7 for guests. The house has five floors and flat sizes range from 22 m². to 130 m². In addition, there are around 600 m². for common use, as well as several terraces.

At time (2005) the community is made up of 27 members with 21 children aged 6 – 23: ten families, among them one single mother, one widowed father and mother, two married couples and six singles (one man and five women). Three of the women are over 70 the oldest is 85. The youngest member is 28. Since 1990, ten children were born and one child was taken into foster care. Two members died at age of 90, one at age 40 and 44. One member left the community after four years. Three couple and a single person joined the community later on.

The seven guest flats are reserved as temporary dwellings for people in difficult situations who want to find their way into an independent life. The flats were often used and are persistently in demand. From 1990 to this day, about 80 people from various countries – among them 24 children – have lived in the B.R.O.T. house for varying periods of time.

When the first large wave of refugees from former Yugoslavia started in 1992, 17 Bosnians were initially accommodated in a camp hastily set up in the gym hall. In the meantime, all of them have found flats of their own. With the exception of one elderly couple who meanwhile has returned to Bosnia, all of them are gainfully employed.

All inhabitants must pay a user fee that covers the cost of their flat. Those unable to pay are supported via the Solidarity Fund. This fund is fed by self-taxation of the community members and by donations from relatives, friends, neighbours, etc. Until now, around € 260 000 had been raised, 75 000 Euro from this fund have been used to support the Bosnian refugees.

The development can be described as a combination of success, “muddling through” and failure. On the whole, most expectations have been fulfilled. Some experiences are qualitatively listed below:

- A common, universally accepted basis as reference point for the resolution of possible conflicts is important for a positive development. In the community, this basis is the belief in God, essentially derived from a Christian perspective and spirit.
- B.R.O.T. has chosen not to define one single point as the standard between such extremes as individuality and obligation but to grant margins instead. These margins vary at least temporary, and partly as well in their leeway for the individual members. The point is how much tension is admissible and conducive. So far, this openness has proved beneficial for all members and for the community as a whole.
- The children of community members adopt elderly women as “new” grandmothers. In general, the children’s circle of friends has expanded. The potential limitations of the downsized nuclear family may be overcome. One example is support through child care (babysitting) on a mutual basis, which particularly eases the burden of mothers, opening up their life, giving them more freedom, and reducing the usual constraints.
- Even though it is not possible to overcome every type of loneliness, contacts among members and with guests show that nobody is left to his or her fate. The experience of benevolence also creates a protected space that promotes freedom.
- The home has succeeded in serving as a passage for most of the guests who came to the home in an attempt to move from being cared for to an independent life.

- The accommodation, the several years of caring for and integrating the Bosnian refugees would have been impossible without the community.
- So far, only one member has left, while several have applied for membership.

Even if several people have been positively motivated to carry out an idea or a project and do receive support from their social environment, there is always the problem of the first step. If it is not taken, all that will remain are "we want to", "we should", "we ought to", etc. In the case of the B.R.O.T. community, the research project on integrative housing as a social service offer decisively contributed to this fundamental first step. The project was supported by the residential building research scheme.

4 A short summary

- Family-fair working sphere has also a macro perspective: It concerns an appropriate contribution of the whole creation of economic value for socially relevant achievements. Apart from worth-rational criteria there are also purpose-rational ones: The productivity of human beings cannot be achieved without substantial achievements in advance, in particular by the families.¹⁰ These are not inferior anyhow for the well-being of citizens and society than professional work.
- A balanced system between the generations and gender, in particular for socially relevant achievements, requires necessarily interference of the state.
- The state has to guarantee the symmetry of generation and gender relationship. The current system is not self balancing. Complex and individualized societies develop towards increasing charges for the generation of children, for mothers and fathers.
- Apart from the worth-rational reasons such as solidarity, justice, fairness, more and more purpose-rational considerations have to be added: The future of mankind, its assets and capacities appear to be in danger.
- Compensations for socially relevant achievements have special importance for the way of life in marriage and family. These changed - as the society changed - from an expected life style to an option. If for this way of life equal chances are asked, appropriate basic conditions have to be created. One of it is the advancement of the "Charges Equalization Fund" ("Lastenausgleichsfonds") to an "Achievement Equalization Fund". In this fund the care achievement has specially to be recognized. A step in this direction is the "Child-care allowance". This had to be developed further in the sense of the feasibility study "Child-care voucher" of the OEIF.
- Not only the state is asked but also the civil society. The development of social networks of communication and co-operation is necessary, if possible close to everyday life. That is recognized by an increasing number of men and women, who try to implement it in their life.

Affiliation:

Helmuth Schattovits, Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Dr.

Born in 1939, married with Renate (born Ruff) since 1965, 4 children, until now 7 grand children;

At last managing director of the Austrian institute for family research (Österreichisches Institut für Familienforschung (ÖIF));

Before this director of the institute of marriage and family of the Austrian bishop's conference (Institut für Ehe und Familie der Österreichischen Bischofskonferenz);

together with his wife Renate member of the papal council for family (Päpstlicher Rat für Familie) 1982/87).

¹⁰ This achievement in advance is not omitted in case of immigrants - it would be fair to transfer it into the country of origin.

Selected figures concerning demography and family life

(Österreichisches Institut für Familienforschung, OIF)

	Birth [,000]		Birth rate (per women)		Death [,000]		Marriages [,000]		Divorces [,000]	
	1990	2003	1990	2003	1990	2003	1990	2003	1990	2003
EU25	5 475	4 731	1.64	1.48	4 562	4 531	2 715	2 193	744	862
PL	548	351	2.04	1.24			255	192	42	45
CZ	131	94	1.89	1.18			91	53	32	32
SK	80	51	2.09	1.17			40	25	9	11
SLO	22	17	1.46	1.22			85	71	2	2.5
A	90	77	1.46	1.38		77 (2004)	45	37	16	19

Statements by Young Professionals

Christel Koehler / MCC Young Professional, France

**FAMILY, ECONOMY, EUROPE
MCC YOUNG PROFESSIONALS CONTRIBUTION**

Family is presented as the base of any human society and strongly supported by the Church as the first cell for individual development. It is however widely perceived that the ground of family knows difficult times in France, and probably in many industrialised countries. My purpose is not only to highlight the decrease of traditional family with married parents but also the whole decrease of family link in general: lonely people with very little family links.

Increase of loneliness

- For instance, 50% of households in Paris are single-member household.
- Number of single people in France: +40% in ten years (around 8 million people).

Social and economic consequences

Many changes occur due to this situation. Not all of them are drawbacks but we can note:

- Decline of birth rate
- Lower revenue
- Housing problems (limited offer)
- Worsened conditions in case of serious problem: disease, redundancy
- Health problems (depressions etc)
- Poorer conditions for elderly people

The good news

In the meantime, a few positive points can be mentioned:

- Higher autonomy of people
- New ways of communication, especially by Internet
- Boom of charity actions (although sometimes punctual), ethical and fair practice concerns.

Prospects

How to foster on the good points and contain major drawbacks? We cannot move backward and have to cope with this situation, by fighting the unfair and promoting a happier human development. MCC and other catholic services could investigate the following points:

- ⇒ Reach lonely people – especially the youth and YP – with their tools: for instance promote catholic blogs and Internet forums
- ⇒ Promote charity & fair actions. So many have been launched by Catholics (Max Havelaar). These actions can introduce places to maintain social links fir those that get help but also those who get involved
- ⇒ Why not encouraging flatmating systems for young Catholics (students or new comers in professional life) and elder people
- ⇒ Focus on “place of word” in any organisation: Church, associations etc. So that people are encouraged to come and find a help to speak.

Anna Andrejuvová / Slovakia

(single, secretary of the Christian Democratic Party CDP = KHD)

Family life and the Christian youth community**2 Subjects:**

- Youth organisations
- Family and influence of media to the families.

To support the life of families:

There are Organisations and activities by young people with a background of the catholic church ()

- movement for children of church community
usual nice families open for the society
- Collecting money for the 3rd World
particularly in Africa to support schools and medical centres

Christian youth community

There are a number of special organisations for young people with special aims and activities:

For example:

- memorial day about unborn children
- intellectual oriented organisations studying Thomas Aquino and so on
- organisations supporting family life
preparing for marriage and/or family life
- political oriented groups near KDH
interested in family law subjects and so on

Dark side of the problem

Lack of money and time (many burdens on their shoulders: flat, food, a. s. o.)

One of the consequences is: It needs more family friendly environment!

Media: shows like taxi orange influence young people – more activity of Christians
using the media is necessary

The realities of the family life and the historical burden in the gender partnership in Austria

by Barbara Mayrhofer (prepared together with Markus Olechowski), AT

Overhead-presentation	Text comments
<p>Definitions of Family in the catechism of the catholic church: "A man and a woman who are married with each other constitute together with their children a family."</p>	
<p>Family in the keynote programme of the largest parties in Austria:</p>	
<p>- ÖVP (Austrian people's party):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * basic of a free society * marriage and family, as a human being's closest relationship * family fulfils irreplaceable functions for the individual and the modern democratic state * two-parent family is model, primarily responsible for raising of children * in modern society many-faceted family situations 	<p>Marriage and the family, as a human being's closest relationship, are the institutions in which people's lives are most deeply rooted. They provide the basis for free society. We want to protect, strengthen and promote them.</p> <p>The family fulfils irreplaceable functions for the individual and the modern democratic state. The family constitutes the first level of socialisation and education, conveying a sense of individuality and togetherness, a whole value system. It is a subjective and objective component of the social order and it corresponds to the longings and desires of the majority of human beings.</p> <p>The two-parent family is our model. This family pattern has proved its value and has been primarily responsible for raising of children.</p> <p>Our political approach is not blind to the fact that changing life prospects and requirements in modern society have led to emergence of the new and many-faceted family situations, such as single-parent families, remarriage, families with children from different marriages, and children from unmarried partner-ships. We take these patterns of life into account in our policies and intend to take the necessary measures to support those concerned.</p>
<p>- Continuation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * family policy has to create the conditions, the freedom of choice comprehensive changes in the organisations of work * state-financed family benefits * assumption of family duties must taken into consideration by public, acknowledged by society * facilitate the reconciliation of family life and the world of work by mothers and fathers, flexible transitions from one to the other, high quality child care * housing, traffic and educational policy also have a strong impact on opportunities for families. 	<p>Family policy has to create the conditions and provide the freedom of choice for women, men and children to fulfil their longings for life in a family and a partnership. To this end, we need a new perception of family culture. It will take comprehensive changes in the organisation of the world of work to create the necessary equilibrium between family and work.</p> <p>State-financed family benefits are to offset some of the burden assumed by those who raise children and/or look after the elderly. As a matter of principle, benefits paid by the state are to be of a subsidiary nature.</p> <p>The assumption of family duties must be taken into consideration by public schemes designed to protect against risks and provide for old age. If men or women opt for the comprehensive fulfilment of family tasks instead of paid employment, this must be duly acknowledged by society.</p> <p>Interactions between family life and the world of work should be such as to facilitate the reconciliation of both by mothers and fathers and to permit flexible transitions from one to the other. Offers of high-quality child care by a variety of institutions,</p>

	<p>designed to meet the needs of children and parents, contribute substantially to the achievement of above. However, the fact remains that this will not replace the intensive web of relationships in the family, but only supplement and enrich it for the benefit of the socialisation of the child.</p> <p>Besides the world of work, housing, traffic and educational policy also have a strong impact on opportunities for families. The provision of a satisfactory infrastructure for housing estates and urban districts, their link-up to public transport, and family-friendly dwellings guarantee, to a large extent, the functioning and humane coexistence of different generations.</p>
Continuation:	
<p>- SPÖ (social-democratic party):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * each form of continuing living together in a form of partnership and democratic form, which offers solidarity, sympathy and protection * create the necessary basic conditions, contributions of equipment and transfer, fiscal measures and social security-legal achievements, most importance has to be located in the well-being of the child * different forms of living together besides the traditional forms of family, gradual legal acknowledgement 	<p>“We understand by family each form of continuing living together in a form of partnership and democratic form, which offers solidarity, sympathy and protection to the individual members of this community. We want to create the necessary basic conditions, in order to improve continuously the living conditions of families and to create a society which meets the needs of families and children.</p> <p>Each form of family has to be supported by the state by a mixture of contributions of equipment and transfer, fiscal measures and social security-legal achievements. Social criteria and therefore the support of income-weak families –often young families, single parents as well as multi-child families- must have priority. Most importance has to be located on the well-being of the child.</p> <p>As we want to make liveable also different form of living together beside the traditional forms of family, a consequence must also be their gradual legal acknowledgement. Existing discriminations for partnership of the same sex are to be overcome toward legal equalization.”</p>
<p>The manifold functions of “household”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economy comes from the Greek οίκος (house), and νόμος (rule, law), hence “household management”, comprises the production, distribution, trade and consumption of goods and services. 	
<p>The specific cultural distinction of Europe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Europe is geological and geographical a subcontinent of Eurasia. It is conventionally considered as a continent, which is more cultural distinction than a geographic one.” 	
The actual situation/problems:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Less and less young people get married: marriage at a higher age when finished basic education or (first) studies: people have higher expectations of a marriage or a partnership than in former times; life expectancy got higher: partnership have to last longer through different periods of life, two partners can develop in different directions or velocities; 	<p>Less and less young people get married:</p> <p>I would say people get married at a higher age when they have finished their basic education or their (first) studies and established a certain position in their profession.</p> <p>I would also say that people have higher expectations of a marriage or a partnership than in former times. Since life expectancy got higher compared to former times there is also the problem that partnerships have to last longer through different periods of life</p>

<p>- More and more often marriages break down by different reasons: Getting separated is better than living under circumstances that do harm to all people concerned especially the children. In former times it was often not possible for women to leave the husband because the economic reasons.</p>	<p>and that the two partners develop in different directions or velocities. More and more often marriages break down by different reasons: Sometimes it is better to get separated than to live under circumstances that do harm to all people concerned especially the children. In former times it was often not possible for women to leave the husband because of economic reasons.</p>
<p>- The number of children goes down dramatically: Decision for or against child, plan the number of children very consciously. Households without children contribute to a great amount by much higher taxes and less subsidies.</p> <p>- Reasons: Standard of living between households with and without children, households of one person have very high costs compared with families, hard to combine professional and family life, much should be done in this field.</p>	<p>Nowadays people have the chance to take the decision for or against a child and to plan the number of children very consciously. I wouldn't say that the households with children don't share very much the burden assuring a sustainable society. In reality they contribute to a great amount by much higher taxes and less subsidies.</p> <p>Reasons: I wouldn't agree at all that the standard of living between households with and without children is extremely high. Especially households that consist only of one person have very high costs compared with families. I agree that it is hard to combine professional and family life and much should be done in this field.</p>
How to go on?	
<p>- Interesting proposal made by Wolfgang Spitaler in this text "In case, I am 30, not 70 years old", maybe it might be easier looking back in thoughts than really living such a life.</p> <p>- A lot of measures must be done until women and men really have the same rights, duties and possibilities without prejudices.</p> <p>- According to Austrian law bride and husband can determine their family name and that of the following children before marriage. Everyone also can keep their own names and determine one for their children. Or you can determine one of the two for the family name and the partner with the other name can add her or his name before or after the common family name. In case of no decision, automatically the name of the husband is taken.</p>	<p>I like very much the proposals made by Wolfgang Spitaler in his text "In case, I am 30, not 70 years old" although it might also be easier looking back in thoughts than really living such a life.</p> <p>I think, that there must be done a lot of measures until women and men really have the same rights, duties and possibilities and don't have to quarrel with prejudices.</p> <p>You only have to look to Austrian law, where bride and husband can determine their family name and that of the following children before marriage. Everyone, bride and husband also can keep their own names and determine of the both for their children. Or you can determine one of the two for the family name and the partner with the other name can add her or his name before or after the common family name. In case of no decision, automatically the name of the husband is taken.</p> <p>This is really valid law, to my opinion it should be against the principle of equality of the constitution. In reality most couples still "choose" the name of the husband for their common name, sometimes the bride adds her name, but very seldom the husband does. I only know one couple, which decided to make the name of the bride for their common.</p>
Traditional behaviour is still common:	
<p>- I gave a puppet to my nephew's first birthday, my own parents asked me, why he got a puppet, he wasn't a girl. When my niece got baptized, she got at least five puppets as presents from all the relatives. Common is, that the mother stays at home with her child for the first years, even with higher salary than the father. Only 3% of the fathers take paternity vacation in Austria.</p> <p>- There exist different linguistic terms for female</p>	<p>I can well remember the first birthday of my nephew 6 years ago, when I gave him a puppet as a present and my own parents asked me. Why he got a puppet, he wasn't a girl. When my niece got baptized one and half a year later, she got at least five puppets as presents from all the relatives. It is still common, that the mother stays at home with her child.</p> <p>For the first years, even when she has a higher salary than the father. Only 3% of the fathers take paternity vacation in Austria.</p> <p>Very much is said about a society where there exist different linguistic terms for female persons and only</p>

<p>and male persons, but mostly the male term is used, especially in plural.</p> <p>Movement to use female terms which also comprise the male term, but use a big "I", for example "PartnerInnen" for "Partnerinnen" and "Partner" mass media like "Austrian broadcast" mostly don't care. Or even worse, only use female terms in case of inferior terms like "Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmer" (employees) but only "Arbeitgeber" (employers).</p>	<p>one male among, the male term is used. In the last years there is a movement to use female terms in German which also comprise the male term, but use a big "I", for example "PartnerInnen" for "Partnerinnen" and "Partner". Or some get more conscious to name as well the male as the female term. But mass media like "Austrian broadcast" mostly don't care, or even worse, only use female terms in case of inferior terms like "Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmer" (employees) but only "Arbeitgeber" (employers).</p>
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Other documents

Family - Economy – Europe : Economy - favourable for families!?

Kick-off paper by Wolfgang Spitaler

1) The Situation:

- Less and less young people get married,
- more and more often marriages break down by different reasons,
- the number of children goes down dramatically,
- the number of children living in a stable family goes down even more dramatically,
- the requirements for general and professional education of children are rising, which means more commitment and costs,
- rising lifetime needs more care for seniors, which is up to now to a great deal the job of family members, very often done by the women,
- etc

To sum up: The human resources of the society go down, the requirements are rising.

The dramatically rising number of households without children don't share very much of the burden assuring a sustainable society. Our system polarizes not only income and labour but also commitment for a sustainable society.

2) Reasons:

- + Frequently young people are said to have less commitment for family and children than years before, no sense for sacrifices, but this does not hit the nail.
- + In any case today the difference of standard of living between households with and without children is extremely high, so decision to have children has got to be tough.
- + The pressure of society to have children went down, personal independence as a human right is generally accepted, especially the influence of religions decreased.
- + A great part of the reasons seem to have their roots in the modern economical system:
 - *Reduced compatibility of professional and family life for both partners,
 - *the job market doesn't offer long term planning to have family and financial resources to afford it,
 - *many young people are concerned by unemployment,
 - *child care in pre-school years is not sufficient all over the country and is expensive,
 - *many jobs need high mobility and long absence from home,
 - *global management moves jobs to low cost countries which increases risk for families.

3) How to go on?

- + The family of the future will not be the family of today.
- + The role of father and mother will change.
- + The economic frame conditions will have to be changed to ensure a sustainable society.
- + The immigration politics of the EU will have to be adjusted from time to time.
- + The society has to change its mind more in favour of children.
- + The religions and churches will have to support motivation for sustainable families, not by transfiguration of the family of yesterday, but by promoting a family in Christian perspective, taking into account aspects above.

All these changes are already going on, it is necessary to support them.

Comments to the Kick-off paper

Texts by SIIAEC friends from MCC France referring to our subjects "Family – Economy" at our meeting in Bratislava 10/05.

(Short versions, translated into English by W. Spitaler).

Questions to the subject of our meeting in Bratislava

(by André Marelle, MCC Paris)

- 1) The main question is: Is our economic system a main source of family crises?
- 2) What has changed in the reform countries as to the situation of the families?
- 3) Is it possible to live (only) one type of "family" in front of a society, which makes no difference in its legislation between marriages, partnerships (bisexual and – in some countries – monosexual) and in states with immigration from countries with other traditions?

Family – Economy.

(Contribution to the distributed initial paper by Madeleine Baron, MCC Paris).

1) General.

The role of father and mother certainly have to change, but there are also some (traditional) attitudes which have to be maintained. A big influence to the care sharing within a family have the individual qualifications of the parents.

Looking around, reduced readiness for marriage is evident, more and more not even for life in partnership.

The fewer marriages get divorced more and more.

But there are also good examples of performing families with happy children, very often in parishes. There are families in charge of many own problems coming to see and to support elder people.

2) The situation.

There is no big difference to the initial text presented with the invitation as to the situation of the families; furthermore growing aggression of children in elementary schools is being noticed, which shows family problems. But there are also positive observations: More baptized children than dying people in the home parish, mutual help in the neighbourhood (testimonies of all day life). Grand parents try to reduce the problems of family care, by contributing to child care and by preparing a solution in case they need care themselves.

3) Reasons for family crises.

- + Generally two salaries are necessary for family life, especially with children, also to reduce the risk of total unemployment within the family, which means little time for family care.
- + Rising cost of public care for children. (Note: Is it reasonable to give children to public care at the age of three years?)
- + The trend to self-realization reduces readiness for lifelong commitment. (psychological reasons)
- + Less communication in family by absence and less devotion, when present.

4) What to do?

Is it reasonable to ask a woman with children to forget her professional education and to interrupt her job for many years in order to care for her children? Certainly also married women want to use their skills in professional life. Some women change to half time employment or they have chosen a profession which does not need full time activity. Husbands have to find a way to support their wives without destabilization of the basic economic needs of their family.

5) To sum up:

- + Families are crucial for the stabilization of society.
- + Self-realization has limits in front of the priority of children education.
- + Families in harmony meet more easily economic problems.
- + Quality of life is not necessarily a question of money.
- + Religion, the Gospel and the dialogue with other Christians may be a support in critical situations.
- + The society must support families by solidarity between the generations, including economic support.

The text ends by giving testimony of active families in the parish, who - together with their children - are the heart of the community, including handicapped and aged people. They really contribute to an optimistic view of the future.

Family – Economy – Europe

(Contribution by André Michel, MCC Bourg-la-Reine, France).

- 1) **Economy is accused to force families** to change their home/country, to be the reason of poverty or even exclusion of society, caused by deregulation of economic rules and of the financial market, which facilitates delocalization of production and unemployment. Families have to face the consequences of tough competition which doesn't care about human consequences.

2) Some facts:

The rate of unemployment in France is 10% of the active population, about 20% of the population below the age of 25 years.

3.5 million people live below the limit of poverty, including many separated parents (about 55%) and many "working poor", 63% of them are working the whole year.

As to the apartments speculation raises the living costs, prices of buildings grew by 15% in 4 years. To find an apartment with a reasonable price you must move to the environment of the cities.

Some facts from Germany (taken from a documentation of the journal "La Croix"):

Rate of children per woman: 1.35 (in France 1.89, in Austria about 1.37)

One of three women has no child.

As to an inquiry in France the number of wanted children differs 5 years after the first inquiry, which has complex reasons. Even in case parents want children, reality often changes their plans.

Unemployment: 11.5%

Poverty: 13.5% (income less than 60% of the average), 35.4% of the "One parent families".

3) Eastern Germany:

Before the crash of the communist system it was easier for families: A testimony of a woman of Leipzig: I paid 10 DDR-Mark per month for public child care, after the unification 180 DM. Today I would hesitate to have two children.

To day in eastern Germany about 37% of the children below 3 years are in public care, in western regions 2.7%.

4) Comments of André:

The society and the politicians are asked to find out the reasons of the economic problems of families, to improve their situation and to give them more financial stability, on different levels: Local, national, international.

The target must be an economy which serves the human beings, not human beings to serve economy.

5) Other aspects influencing family life: Psychological and social aspects.

Why create a family? This is the crucial question of two young human beings, to decide in liberty. The personal options have changed, because the living conditions have changed:

- + Two world wars have passed by,
- + progress of technology,
- + many people have moved from the country to the cities,
- + most women have professional education and want to implement it,
- + trend to individualism and personal autonomy.

On this background many different ideas about family life and motivation to raise up children have been developed, including those of other cultures represented by immigrants.

The social background also influence the decisions and options of young people:

- + Family traditions,
- + local habits,
- + the media present what is "in"
- + the state intervenes by laws and other messages, which influences human values.

All these aspects influence the economic conditions of families indirectly:

For example the media suggest consummation mentality, to throw away and buy, to buy by credit, which is not feasible in many families. The consequences may be serious and may cause poverty, in case families are not strong enough to withstand.

6) Conclusion:

- + Families must fight against indirect influences of economy, as creation of artificial needs and to fall asleep in prosperity, which they can't afford,
- + mentality of society has to be changed to more solidarity, vitality. Example: There are lobbies, who use expressions as humanity, liberation, tolerance to devaluate family and marriage.
- + We have to fight for an economy in favour of human beings, of all human beings, which is a permanent fight.
- + We have to develop a vision of lifelong families in which children may be raised up to free personalities by care in love.

A very personally statement to the subject "Economy – Family – Europe".

In case, I am 30, not 70 years old....

I would like to have a family, as many of young Europeans like...

I would like to start in a different way than I did many years ago:

I would like

- + to propose to my wife to share caring about the children between father and mother,
- + to convince my and my wife's company/office to reduce working time to about 30 hours a week (5 x 6), so that each of us is able to look after the children half a day.
- + to return to normal time table step by step after the children grow up,

Who wins?

The children, because they have a father, who represents not only authority but really cares for them as mother does,

Mother, because she is able to have children without interrupting her job, which meets the problem of reintegration into the job after the time of "Mother care" and improves her situation on the job market,

Father, because he really learns to feel like a father, taking care of his children, creating sustainable family relations,

Mother and father, because they have more time, flexibility, to prepare a new job, if necessary – which is rather usual nowadays,

Companies, because they have employees working from 7.00 in the morning to 20.00 in the evening without paying overtime, reducing costs of equipment, which is used 13 instead of 8.5 hours a day,

Trade Unions, because they have a reason to fight for a share of the cost reduction in favour of the employees,

Government, because more employees work less, which means better distribution of work, reducing unemployment,

Communities, because they need less nursery schools,

Social system, because less supports for child-care is needed. Support for mother-care could be adapted to this kind of care-sharing.

Who looses? Or is it a win-win-situation? Find out!

Wolfgang Spitaler.

Supplement (compressed to 4 pages):

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Bright spots and shadows for the family today ^{FC, 4-10}

Reflection in social and psychological research

Power point presentation

see separate file: "BRIGHT SPOTS AND SHADOWS FOR THE FAMILY TODAY" (ppt)