



SPANISH PRESIDENCY  
COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION



**Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union  
Madrid, 27 September 2023  
Paseo del Prado, 18-20**

**Conference “Towards comprehensive social protection  
for families in Europe”**

Families are essential units of society and play a fundamental role in the economy. In fact, they constitute a key economic and social support for the vast majority of citizens and a basic mechanism of solidarity, redistributing resources between individuals, households and generations, and providing protection in difficult situations.

The need to guarantee the social, legal and economic protection of families takes part of the great international documents and agreements, including the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and national Constitutions.

However, family life and family models have changed substantially in recent decades due to the recent great economic, social, and cultural transformations. Currently, there is a wide variety of family models and relationships: married and unmarried couples, of different or of the same sex, with or without children, single parent stepfamily or blended family, etc.

The development of family life over the life course has also shifted, with a more dynamic and less standardized pathway than before.

At the same time, most of the parents, fathers and mothers wish both a working career and an active family life. Female employment rates have steadily increasing in the European Union countries and in most of them, children in families formed by couples, are more likely to have both parents working than only one of them.

Nevertheless, the distribution of cares and domestic tasks between men and women has not evolved at the same pace. It is still far from being a balanced distribution. Actually, employed mothers use to spend more time on these tasks, even when the father is unemployed.

In this context, family support policies are necessary in the economic sphere, parental leave, and care services or in matters of flexibility in the workplace in order to support parents, fathers and mothers who are under pressure to reconcile work and personal and family life.

Likewise, all these aspects come with potential challenges throughout the life course, implying that social protection and social investments must be able to protect individuals from the risks they tackle throughout the life cycle, regardless of their family type. Consequently, laws and policies must meet the challenge of protecting all specific types of families, being Legal recognition and regulation of the various family structures a key mechanism of social inclusion.

Therefore, there are many challenges to address from family policies. Thus, Family policies must be multidimensional to achieve their different objectives. It has to deal with aspects such as reconciliation of work and family life, parental employment, poverty and exclusion, female employment and gender equality.

These policies must include the improvement of the conditions so that families can choose the number of children they wish to have, and the decision of when to have them. They have to be able to promote the well-being and development of children whatever it may be the family model in which they live.

In the last years, The EU has been dealing with many of these challenges, such as, for example, promoting the European child guarantee, improving regulations on conciliation and parental leave or guaranteeing the coordination of Social Security systems, although to a large extent supporting families policy remain within the scope of national competence.

In this Conference, we intend, first of all, to identify the evolution and challenges that EU countries must undertake in terms of support for families, the different models of family protection that exist, recent trends and developments in this area

We also try to define some lines of action for the future, both within the framework of the European Union and national policies, which allow progress towards a comprehensive social protection for all families.

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Program.

**08.30-09.00** Participants and delegation's registration and welcome

**09.00-09.30** Opening

**General coordination and presentations: M<sup>a</sup>. Dolores Ruiz.** Deputy Director of Social Programs. Ministry of Social Rights and Agenda 2030.

**Ignacio Álvarez.** Secretary of State for Social Rights.

**Katarina Ivankovic-Knezevic.** Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. European Commission.

**09.30-11.00** Families in EU: diagnosis and models for family protection in the EU

**Evolution of family policies in Europe**

**Willem Adema.** Senior Economist at OECD. Social Policy Division.

**Demographic challenges in today's Europe**

**Diederik Boertien.** Researcher at the Center for Demographic studies of the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

**Needs and demands of European families**

**Elizabeth Gosme.** Director of COFACE Families Europe.

**Moderation: Félix Barajas.** Deputy Director General of Diversity Familiar. Ministry of Social Rights and 2030 Agenda.

**Question and answer session with the audience.**

**11.00-11.30** Coffee break.

**11.30-13.00** Recent developments and good practices to improve family support policies in the Member States of the EU

**Priorities in family's protection:**

**Spain Families policies**

**Patricia Bezunartea.** General Director of Family Diversity and Social Services. Ministry of Social Rights and 2030 Agenda.

**Spain. - Social investment: the child benefit in the Spanish Minimum Income Scheme**

**Milagros Paniagua.** Secretary General of Inclusion. Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migrations.

**International experiences and good practices in family support policies**

**Angelo Marano.** Director General for Pension and Insurance Policies at the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies.

**Alexandra Lacinová.** Ministerial Adviser. Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in Czech Republic.

**Moderation: José Fernández.** General Director for social security planning. Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migrations.

**Question and answer session with the audience.**

**13.00-15.00 Lunch break.**

**15.00-16.45 Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and its Action Plan, with a focus on specific issues in family policies. Addressing child poverty and gender gap reduction in pensions**

**Overview of the European Pillar of Social Rights**

**Katarina Ivankovic-Knezevic.** Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. European Commission.

**Fighting child poverty and family vulnerability: The European Child Guarantee in Spain**

**Lucía Losoviz.** General Director of Children's Rights. Ministry of Social Rights and 2030 Agenda

**Development of parental and family support services in Europe**

**Lucía Jiménez.** Chair of Eurofamnet: The European Family Support Network

**Pensions as a livelihood for families after active life, and its incidence in reducing the gender gap**

**José Fernández.** General Director for social security planning. Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migrations.

**Moderation: Patricia Bezunarte.** General Director of Family Diversity and Social Services. Ministry of Social Rights and 2030 Agenda.

**Question and answer session with the audience.**

**16.45-17.15 Closing and conclusions.**

**Patricia Bezunarte.** General Director of Family Diversity and Social Services. Ministry of Social Rights and 2030 Agenda.