population ageing and generation solidarity, the main objectives are employment of the elderly; assuring a proper life quality; assuring participation in public life and education; development of social services (Lietuvos, 2004).

When developing ageing policy (which constitutes part of social policy), it is important to ensure equal possibilities for all generations to fully contribute to the economic and social development of their country; to create conditions encouraging solidarity relationships between generations both in the private and in the public spheres of life; to ensure equal possibilities for all generations to enjoy the results of economic and social development; to consolidate support for families that take care of weaker family members of different generations. However, it is necessary to stress that family, in spite of its different forms, was and still is the main guarantee of solidarity between generations.

When trying to achieve solidarity between generations, it is important to develop consultative support (legal, psychological, etc.) for all family members who need such support and for families of all kinds; when realizing social policy measures, to give preference to those measures which encourage communication between generations, sharing experience and spending time together in the family and at work; to expand the supply and variety of social services for families that take care of weaker family members of different generations.

Initiative and activity of the elderly, as well as the maximum utilization of their living experience, should be considered as priority values. When planning social policy for the elderly, one should take into consideration the fact that that the elderly possess different resources (health, knowledge, income, etc.) to for enjoying life of full value. For some people it is sufficient to create possibilities to fully participate in public life, others need to be enabled to pursue these aims (firstly, by granting them social support) (Lietuvos, 2004). Some need favourable conditions for their employment and self-expression; others require a favourable retirement scheme (including gradual decrease in employment, compensating for income decline with services, etc.); yet others require an adequate supply of services which would satisfy their needs. All this depends on life cycle. It also depends on specific conditions in a particular country.

As family is considered to be the main guarantee of solidarity between generations, as well as provider of informal (natural) support for the elderly, the development of population aging policy must involve the development of social services helping adult children to pay their duties to elderly parents; it is also necessary to make sure that provided services maintain close relationships between generation and do not initiate alienation. The main objectives, thus, could be to consolidate human social relationship networks and to improve the supply of informal support (to diminish psychological and physical stress experienced by support providers, to legally consolidate conditions simplifying work and care-for-elderly-parents reconciliation) (Mikulioniene, 2003). Simultaneously, it is necessary to develop an adequate formal social policy of support for the elderly.

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Comments and Notes on the Green Paper

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Comments on child care and leave arrangements as the key element of family policy:

The EU has played the active role in the development of national child care and leave policies by setting certain minimum standards applying to all member states. The role of the EU does not need to be confined only to introducing new policy requirements for member states. Cohen (1999) set out a number of specific actions that the EU could undertake: regular review, a programme of monitoring, research and evaluation, guidance to member states on good practice, and funding for action programmes involving social partners and the work place.

As a basis for improving existing policies and thinking about new directions six areas where better information and more research are needed were identified (Moss & Deven, 1999, 2002). These areas were: improved statistical information, how and why a range of decisions are made, impact of leave taking, parental and family diversity, the workplace, and the use of the total policy package. Gender should be seen as a cross-cutting theme covering all six areas.

The use of the total 'policy package' should aim at supporting different parental combinations of employment and child care. Parental leave arrangements is only one pillar for supporting the reconciliation of employment and family life, alongside three other pillars 'child care services', 'the environment, structure and organisation of work' and greater sharing of responsibilities' for children between men and women.

National policies regarding child care and leave arrangements differ as they reflect varying purposes from encouraging mothers to stay at home through to promoting gender equity by supporting mothers' employment. Further development of policies in this area requires wider research to understand both leave polices themselves and how and why leave policies are used. There is an increasing appreciation of the significance of social constructions of childhood, fatherhood and motherhood in the development of national policies. The final report of the recent OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care policies and provisions in 12 countries argues that they are embedded in cultural and social beliefs about young children. The key elements of successful policy need to be discussed in light of social constructions of childhood (OECD, 2001)

Recent developments. which have been mainly in parental leave especially focused on fathers. Nevertheless. fathers' use of leave has remained rather minor. Future research on determinants of fathers' use of parental leave should simultaneously focus on the relations between mothers and fathers in the family and the relations between each employed parent, their employers, and work groups.

Leave arrangements should be located within a larger framework. One concerns the movement towards 'cash-for-care' policies. This trend has received more attention with respect to adults, where many countries are introducing policies that provide cash benefits to care receivers, with which they may purchase their own care rather than rely on the direct provision of care services supplied by public or private agencies.

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