



# Social Convergence In Europe



Social Situation Monitor  
Research Seminar

Monday 26 November 2018  
13:30 – 17:00

Crowne Plaza Hotel  
2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
Rue Gineste 3  
1210 Brussels  
Belgium

## Table of Contents

About the seminar	3
Seminar agenda	4
Speakers & abstracts	5
The venue	10
Travel information	11
On-site services	12
Contact and registration	12

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## About the seminar

### The Social Situation Monitor

Each year the Social Situation Monitor (SSM):

- Carries out policy-relevant analysis and research on the current socio-economic situation in the EU on the basis of the most recent available data;
- Examines major issues which are features of the situation or affect it with the aim of providing evidence on which to base policy-making across the EU.

This initiative is directed by the London School of Economics (LSE), in consortium with ICF, on behalf of the European Commission. The team is led by the Academic Director, Dr. Bob Hancké from LSE, and the Project Director, Dr. Simona Milio from ICF. The team is composed of renowned academics and researchers from the consortium organisations reflecting a wide range of expertise.

More information can be found at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1049&>

### The SSM seminar series

SSM seminars are research seminars. Their aim is to provide a forum to discuss the theoretical, methodological and policy implications of the latest economic and social research. More specifically, SSM seminars aim to inform:

- The economic and social analysis of the European Commission in general, and the Commission's *Employment and Social Developments in Europe* review in particular\*.
- The economic and social analysis of the European Commission's stakeholders.
- The economic and social policies of the European Commission and its stakeholders.

SSM seminars are primarily intended to:

- Economists and analysts working in policy-making organisations;
- Academic researchers;
- Policy officers with an interest in economic and social analysis.

(\*) The *Employment and Social Developments in Europe* reviews can be found in the European Commission's publications catalogue:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1285&langId=en>

## Seminar agenda

### **13:00 – 13:30 Registration**

- 13:30 – 13:40 Welcome words  
By Barbara Kauffmann (European Commission)  
*To be confirmed*
- 13:40 – 13:50 Introduction  
By Bob Hancké (LSE)
- 13:50 – 14:30 *Convergence in living standards: what do we know?*  
By Antonio Savoia (University of Manchester)
- 14:30 – 15:10 *Institutional divergence and the stability of a two-speed Euro area*  
By Salvador Pérez-Moreno (University of Malaga)
- ### **15:10 – 15:40 Coffee break**
- 15:40 – 16:10 *Looking Back to Convergence Trends and Inequality Developments in Central- and Eastern Europe: Almost Three Decades After the Transition*  
By Márton Medgyesi (TARKI Social Research Institute)
- 16:10 – 16:50 *Convergence towards a Dual Earner Model? Contrasting changes in family-related attitudes and family policies across Europe*  
By Dirk Hofäcker (University of Duisburg-Essen)
- 16:50 – 17:00 Concluding remarks  
By Loukas Stemitsiotis (European Commission)

## Speakers & abstracts

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### *Convergence in living standards: What do we know?*

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**Speaker** Antonio Savoia  
University of Manchester

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**Bio** Antonio Savoia is a senior lecturer (associate professor) in development economics at the University of Manchester's Global Development Institute and a researcher at the Effective States and Inclusive Development research centre. Before joining the University of Manchester, he has worked at the University of Exeter, the University of Reading and the University of Bath.

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**Abstract** The idea of convergence can be broadly defined as the process of levelling in living standards, economic as well as social, across two or more economies or regions. Traditionally, research in this area was concerned with the study of whether economies starting with low per-capita income levels would catch up with economies starting with high-income levels. Recent analysis of convergence has been extended to the evolution of other development outcomes, such as economic inequality variables. However, this is an area that has not received sufficient scrutiny, although it is an important aspect in determining whether contemporary differences in development outcomes across countries or regions are transitory or permanent. This presentation will introduce the idea of convergence (unconditional and conditional) and survey the relevant literature, illustrating measurement issues and empirical findings. Lastly, it will show initial evidence on convergence in poverty and inequality levels across EU states and regions.

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## *Institutional divergence and the stability of a two-speed Euro area*

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**Speaker** Salvador Pérez-Moreno  
University of Malaga

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**Bio** Salvador Pérez-Moreno is Associate Professor of Economic Policy at the University of Malaga. He is also Research Associate at the Cambridge Centre for Economic and Public Policy (University of Cambridge), and Affiliated Researcher at UNU-MERIT (United Nations University and Maastricht University). Researcher of the research group 'Public Economics and Equity' (SEJ-559) and member of EQUALITAS and AHEAD Network, among other international research networks. He received a Master's degree in Development Finance from the University of London (SOAS) and a PhD in Economics from the University of Malaga. His research interests cover economic policy and institutions, income distribution, poverty, inclusive growth and socioeconomic development (with special interest in child welfare and gender issues).

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**Abstract** Divergence in institutional quality between Euro area countries is likely to increase the vulnerability of the Euro to negative economic shocks. This paper evaluates potential convergence in institutions in the Euro area countries since the onset of the Great Recession, highlighting a two-speed Euro area. We find  $\beta$ -divergence and  $\sigma$ -divergence in institutional quality over the crisis period (2008-2014) and  $\beta$ -convergence and  $\sigma$ -convergence over the subsequent recovery period (2014-2017) by using the wide range of institutional variables of the Global Competitiveness Index. Nevertheless, an increasing gap in institutional quality between the core and the periphery is noted, which is even more pronounced over the recovery period. The findings reveal that EU wide agreements on structural reforms to enhance institutional quality across periphery countries, with a special focus on government efficiency, are required to bring the two-speed Euro area on a common course and to increase the stability of the Euro.

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## *Looking Back to Convergence Trends and Inequality Developments in Central- and Eastern Europe: Almost Three Decades After the Transition*

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**Speaker** Márton Medgyesi  
TARKI Social Research Institute, Budapest

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**Bio** Marton Medgyesi holds an MSc in Applied Economics (with a specialisation in demographic economics) from IEP Paris and a PhD in Sociology from Corvinus University in Budapest. His main research interests are income distribution, private and public intergenerational transfers, and redistribution. He has been working as a researcher at TARKI Social Research Institute since 1997 and regularly lectures on social policy at the Corvinus University. Medgyesi is involved in a number of international projects at TARKI, including the "European Observatory on the Social Situation - Network on Social Inclusion and Income distribution", National Transfers Accounts project of the National Institute of Aging, and Millennium Development Goals country report on Hungary (UNDP).

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**Abstract** The paper looks at trends in Central and Eastern European countries, exploring both convergence between these countries and the centre of the EU on the one hand and comparative inequality trends within some of the central/eastern European economies on the other. The region covered includes the three Baltic States, the four Visegrad countries, in addition to Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria. For time series data the period covered stretches from the beginning of the '90s until the most recent available year.

The aim is to answer the following questions:

- What patterns of income convergence and inequality developments can be identified for CEE countries that experienced a transition from non-democratic regimes and centrally planned economies to competitive markets and representative democracies?
  - What kind of similarities and dissimilarities can we identify with regard to the drivers behind societal changes in these countries?
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The historic and social development of the countries studied in this paper show important similarities. As a first institutional change, the transition from command to market economy and from dictatorship to liberal democracy shall have to be mentioned. The second large institutional adaptation process was linked to the accession to the EU. Within this process a great deal of legal harmonization to the EU acquis had to be completed, implying similar procedures but varying extent of harmonization for the various countries and various fields.

Despite the broad similarities between institutional structures of liberal democracy and market economy, the chosen economic and social policies and institutions adopted in CEE countries differed to a significant extent. The paper compares developments in these countries by focussing on economic convergence to EU15 member state, on distributional issues and on well-being and satisfaction of the population."

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## *Convergence towards a Dual Earner Model? Contrasting changes in family-related attitudes and family policies across Europe*

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**Speaker** Dirk Hofäcker  
University of Duisburg-Essen

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**Bio** Dirk Hofäcker, Dr. rer.pol., is currently Professor for Methods of Quantitative Social Research at the Faculty of Educational Sciences (Institute for Social Work and Social Policy) at the University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany. From 2010 to 2013, Hofäcker was Senior Research Fellow at the Mannheim Center for European Social Research (MZES) at Mannheim University, where he still holds the status of an External Fellow. Hofäcker has published on various topics in comparative life course sociology, labour market analysis and welfare state research in national and international journals and monographs. Simone Braun MA, co-author of the paper, is currently researcher and lecturer at the Faculty of Educational Sciences (Institute for Social Work and Social Policy) at the University of Duisburg-Essen.

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## Abstract

One aim of the 'Europe 2020' agenda has been increasing women's employment across Europe. Implementation of this aim rests on two basic preconditions: (i) the normative acceptance and (ii) the promotion of women's employment through work-family-reconciliation policies. Our paper investigates how far European countries have progressed in meeting these dual challenges in a three-step design. First, using data from the International Social Survey Programme 1988, 1994, 2002 and 2012 for up to 22 European countries, it reconstructs long-term trends in the acceptance of women's employment as well as the desired type (full- versus part-time). Aggregated results suggest that there has been a move from a traditional breadwinner orientation towards a dual earner model, though with cross-national variation in the speed and magnitude. Convergence in attitudes towards women's employment thus is paralleled by persistent cross-national differences.

Second, we decompose attitudinal trends by socio-demographic indicators including gender, age, education, employment and family status. Applying regression techniques allows us investigating which nation-specific social groups have been the frontrunners and the laggards in the attitudinal trends.

Third, we contrast attitudinal patterns at the aggregate and the group level with shifts in reconciliation policies, such as childcare services and family-related leaves, using institutional data sources. This allows us investigating whether countries where policy reforms have been most profound are also those where attitudes have changed most comprehensively. Are there countries where public policies actually "lag behind" manifest attitudinal changes? And, vice versa, are there countries where public policies have run ahead of rather modest changes in employment-related attitudes?

The paper closes with a critical assessment of the promotion of women's employment across Europe and potential challenges for its future convergence. "

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## The venue

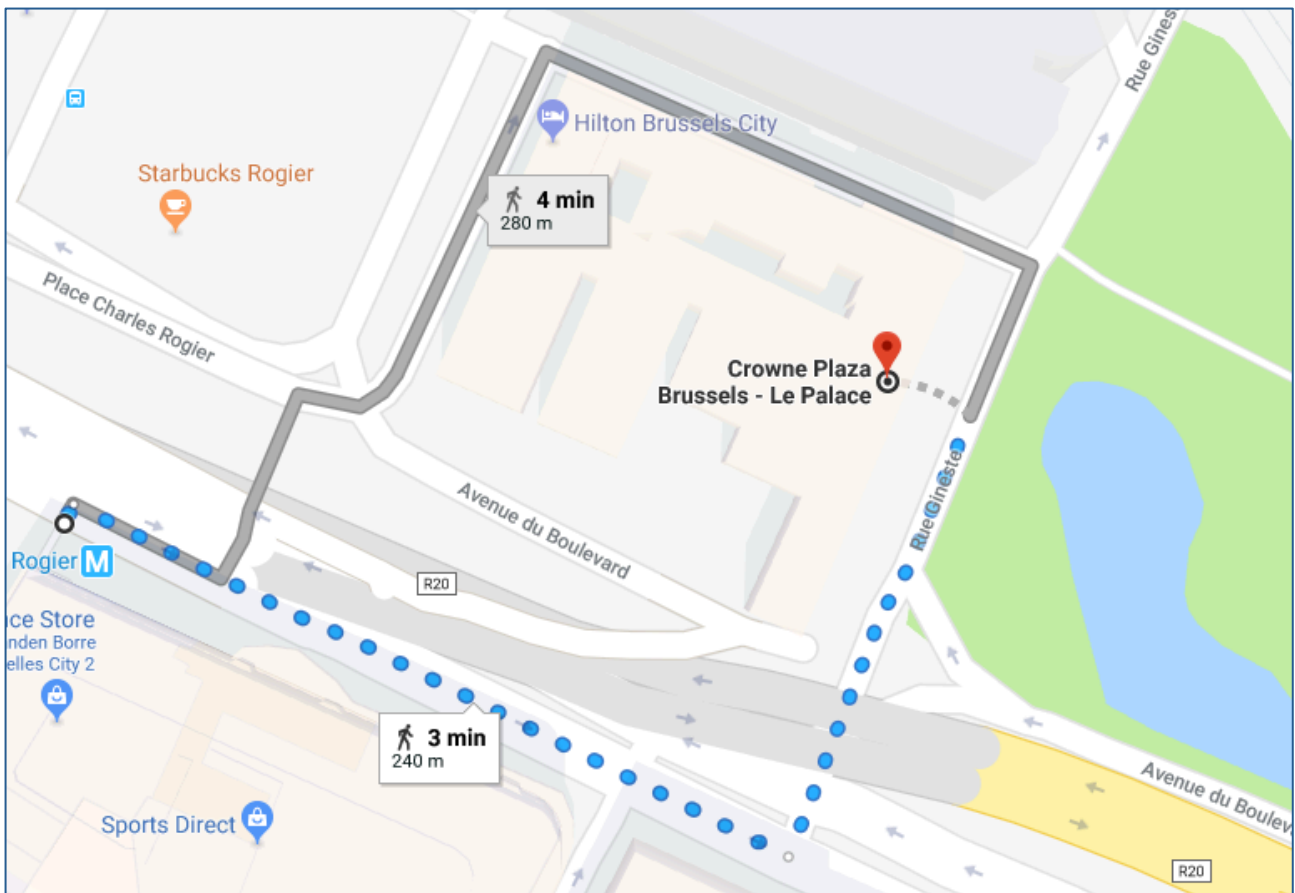


Crowne Plaza Brussels  
Serenity Room  
2<sup>nd</sup> floor

Rue Gineste 3,  
1210 Brussels, Belgium

Metro: Rogier

## Travel information



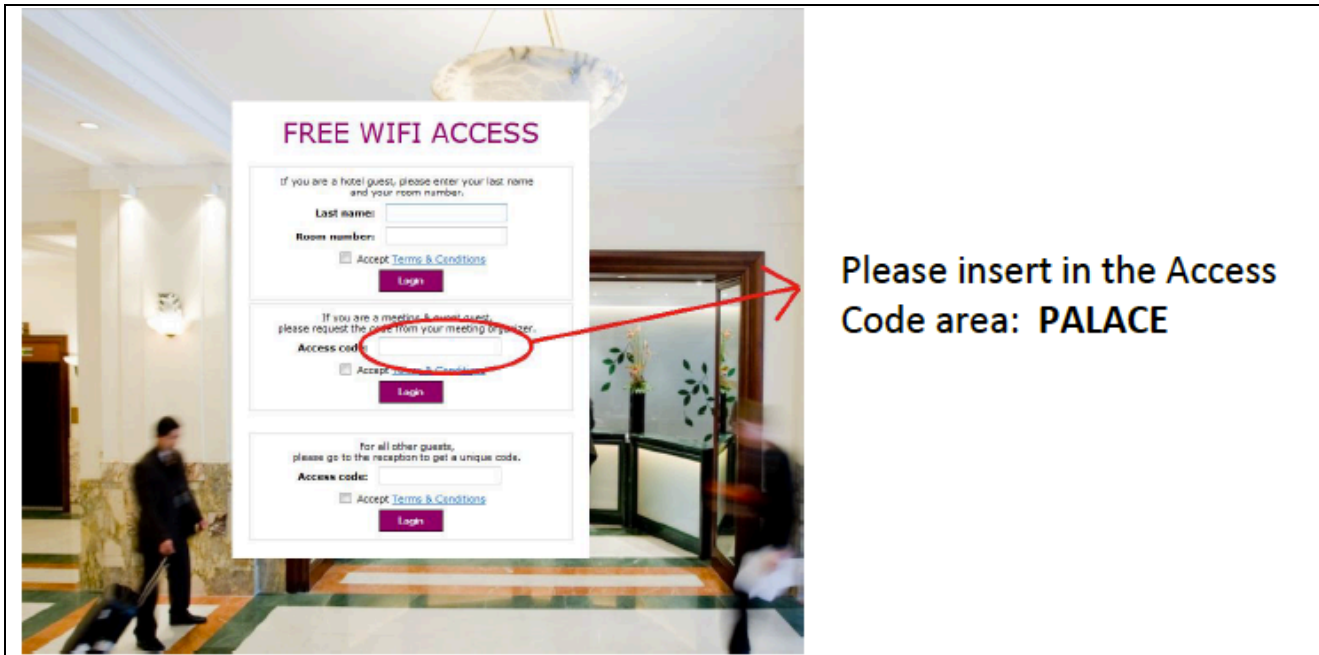
Starting point	Time to Crowne Plaza	How
Metro Rogier	3 min	Walk
Brussels North Station	6 min	Walk
Brussels Midi Station	18 min	Tram 3 or 4
DG Employment	14 min	Metro 2 or 6

## On-site services

Wifi

Network Name: Crowne-Plaza-Free-Internet

Sign in from your internet browser



**FREE WIFI ACCESS**

If you are a hotel guest, please enter your last name and your room number.

Last name:

Room number:

Accept [Terms & Conditions](#)

Login

If you are a meeting attendee, please request the code from your meeting organizer.

Access code:

Accept [Terms & Conditions](#)

Login

For all other guests, please go to the reception to get a unique code.

Access code:

Accept [Terms & Conditions](#)

Login

Please insert in the Access Code area: **PALACE**

Catering

Coffee and tea will be served during the break.

## Contact and registration

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