

Action IS1102

SOCIAL SERVICES, WELFARE STATE AND PLACES. The restructuring of social services in Europe and its impacts on social and territorial cohesion and governance (SO.S.COHESSION)

Objectives

The aim of the Action is to share and compare knowledge about the features and effects of the recent restructuring of social services in different national/regional contexts from five points of view: efficiency; democratic governance; social and territorial cohesion; the labour market; gender, with a view to identifying regulatory conditions, organisational configurations, and actual practices that maximise benefits from some or all mentioned points of view, thereby contributing recommendations to establish basic common European social policy guidelines. Among social services, the Action will especially focus on care services. This general objective will be pursued by building a flexible and open network for the structured exchange of comparative knowledge, analytical methodologies and research findings.

Abstract

In the last 20 years social services have experienced significant restructuring throughout Europe (involving cuts in public funding, devolution to local governments, externalisation to private providers). The fiscal crisis of states (on the supply side) and the need to ensure greater efficiency, wider consumer choice and more democratic governance (on the demand side) are among the reasons for such changes. The recent global financial crisis and the awareness that social services are a major vehicle of social and territorial cohesion have brought social services back on the EU agenda. The COST frame will allow existing knowledge to be shared and valorised within a structured comparative framework, with a view to disseminating findings at the local and international scale and to identifying inputs for a European social policy platform.



Keywords: Social services, welfare regimes, restructuring, social and territorial cohesion, social innovation.

Working Groups

- WG1 Comparison of regulatory frameworks and organizational trajectories in social services.
- WG2 Analysis of the effects of changes in care services.
- WG3 Comparative assessment of good practices, to provide policy inputs.

Interested Countries: 7

Proposer: **IT**

**AT, BE, CZ, DK,
EL, UK**

