

15th Conference „Social Monitoring and Reporting in Europe“

Increasing Divergence and Changing Social Trends in Europe? – Longer-term Developments and Consequences of the Pandemic –

Villa Vigoni, Lovenno di Menaggio, March 8-10, 2021

Call for Papers

The 15th „Social Monitoring and Reporting in Europe“ – Conference addresses two likewise pressing questions simultaneously: (1) How do the longer-term social developments in Europe look like, and did they result in increasing divergence recently, as some observers suspect? (2) Are we currently witnessing a reversal of relevant social trends due to the Corona Pandemic?

The initiation and arrangement of processes resulting in convergence among the member states of the European Union has always been and still is a great hope and major goal of EU policies, for example the introduction of a common European currency. It is thus upward convergence in economic, social and territorial terms – ultimately convergence and progress in well-being and socio-economic levels and structures – whilst preserving diversity in terms of cultures and languages at the same time that is at the heart of European integration and the European project.

In 2012 the World Bank Report „Golden Growth“ acknowledged that “Europe has achieved economic growth and convergence that is unprecedented” and attested Europe to be a „convergence machine“. A more recent (2018) World Bank Report - titled „Growing United“ – however identified „growing divides“ and thus came to a different assessment.

Is divergence – between European nations and regions – really increasing? Are socio-economic developments going in different directions in European societies? Whereas economic convergence has been widely studied, social convergence and divergence are obviously not equally well researched. Systematic research on trends, drivers, and consequences of social convergence or divergence still seems to be underdeveloped. Reflecting on the diagnosis of „growing divides“, the 15th „Social Monitoring and Reporting in Europe“ - conference thus seeks to bring together and discuss empirical evidence allowing to better assess whether or not and to what extent European societies are diverging in terms of well-being, attitudes and socioeconomic structures. Issues to be addressed include e.g.

- Living apart together? – measuring the extent of similarity and dissimilarity of European countries
- Convergence and divergence in quality of society, civic values, and political preferences
- Convergence and divergence in well-being, living standards, social structures and inequalities
- Trends of regional inequalities in Europe

- Consequences of divergence, e.g. in trust and views of the citizens: is the European project at risk?
- Observations of „undesired convergence“, e.g. diminished diversity in cultural domains

A second, but related question concerns recent observations of major reversals in social trends regarding well-being, attitudes and behavior, and how these are connected with the Corona pandemic. What is the nature and what are the causes of these changes? Will the COVID-19 pandemic prove to be a major „game changer“? First-hand answers may be given based on the results of numerous innovative survey projects, which were established at short notice in many European countries with a view to monitor the implications and consequences of the pandemic for the way people live, work and feel across Europe. Examples of changing social trends might refer to

- Labour market and working conditions
- Living arrangements and subjective well-being
- Trust in and appreciation of institutions
- Social (support) networks and frequency of social contacts
- Attitudes and expectations towards the future
- Inequality in different dimensions and domains

As always, we are also inviting contributions presenting new initiatives, projects and releases for a session on „recent developments in European social monitoring and reporting“.

Please submit your abstract (no more than 300 words) to Dr. Heinz-Herbert Noll (hh.noll@t-online.de). **The deadline for submissions is December 4, 2020.**

Decisions about the acceptance of submissions will be made by the conference committee: Jeroen Boelhouwer (SCP, The Hague), Carla Collicelli (CNR, Rome), Peter Farago (formerly FORS, Lausanne), Tadas Leončikas (Eurofound, Dublin), Heinz-Herbert Noll (formerly GESIS, Mannheim), Christian Suter (University Neuchatel), István György Tóth (TARKI, Budapest).

Depending on the development of the COVID-19 pandemic it will be decided in due time whether the conference can be held in a hybrid format, combining an on-site event at the Villa Vigoni with a "virtual" online component or must be held in an online-only format.

For information on previous conferences see: <http://www.tarki.hu/villa-vigoni-conferences>

The conference is kindly supported by:

