



Prof. Sven Hort, Linnaeus University:

From Social Europe to the Nordic Welfare Model

Swedish Institute at Athens, April 16 2018, 19.00

Abstract

The Welfare State is usually considered a European invention. Almost 140 years ago Furst Bismarck established social insurance institutions in the new Germany ("Second Reich"). During the Second World War William Beveridge became the architect of the encompassing and universal WS. In the early post-war period it was in the Far North that this model matured and soon became internationally recognized as the Social Democratic welfare regime type.

The Continental European Economic Community (EEC) had initially been able to keep social welfare issues at bay within national borders - even the Italian "southern question" delegated to Rome - and only reluctantly settled human border-crossings between member-states. With the entrance of Eire (Republic of Ireland) some measures were taken by Brussels to improve regional social disparities within the EEC which soon also applied to Greece, Portugal and Spain. However, from the end of the East-West divide - the Cold War - this market model thoroughly expanded throughout the Continent and distributional issues gradually increased in importance. In the mid-1990s previous conflicts over the social dimension of the Union on the surface disappeared for a decade. Social Europe seemingly was in place when the euro was introduced at the start of the new Millennium.

This saga did not last for long, and in its aftermath the Nordic Welfare Model has flourished. Whether this figure of thought is more than a saga will be the theme of the presentation on Monday April 16th.