

Reinventing Family Policies in CEE

When we look at the states in Central and Eastern Europe, we may notice that most governments realize the importance of supporting not only their societies in general, but more specifically *families* – especially nowadays, with the numerous crises ravaging the region. However, we should ask ourselves whether the continuing interest of politicians in the matter is guided by their willingness to improve the conditions in which families live or to boost birth rates, or rather are their actions a result of wanting to gain the continuous support of voters.

Recently, we could observe a surge of policies that seem to be influenced by the latter – which may be a cause for concern. When political ambitions overshadow the heart of the matter, the essence of the problems at hand oftentimes becomes blurred, if not distorted altogether by populist agendas. Consequently, some programs become misguided or not inclusive enough. Some families become *invisible* to the system, whereas others are treated favorably – especially when they reflect more ‘traditional’ values. At the same time, it is questionable whether such programs are economically sound.

Meanwhile, in open, supportive, and inspired societies, the rights of each family should be treated equally as much as possible – especially considering policies aimed at providing opportunities or easing various burdens. Indeed, “*To put the world right in order, we must first put the nation in order. To put the nation in order, we must first put the family in order*” as Confucius observed. Unfortunately, the problem is that very often politicians use this rule quite literally and attempt to interfere with the very *vision* of a family’s composition, which should not be up to them. Single parents, grandparents raising their grandchildren, same-sex partnerships – all these, among others, should not be excluded when introducing initiatives that are later dubbed ‘family policies’. Our societies are diverse and so this phenomenon must be reflected in respective programs – especially given the fact that many CEE societies face the issue of declining birth rates.

Therefore, we hereby present to you our latest issue of the *4liberty.eu Review* devoted to the idea of reinventing family policies in Central and Eastern Europe. We have thus collected various national perspectives, taken stock of available social programs and policies in place, and attempted to provide the Reader with possible solutions to improving the *status quo* – which, in most cases, leaves much to be desired. Despite a rather grim picture, we remain hopeful that decision-makers will take notice of available solutions and good practices, and implement policies that are much more inclusive, facts based, and accessible – to ensure that the future of the family in the region becomes bright.

Enjoy your reading,



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