



**Innovative Social Policies for Inclusive and Resilient Labour Markets in Europe**



**D5.3**

## **Policy learning in Europe: Social policy and labour market reforms in 11 countries**

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**Abstract:**

This report compares policy learning processes in 11 European countries. Based on the country reports that were produced by the national teams of the INSPIRES project ([www.inspires-research.eu](http://www.inspires-research.eu)), this paper develops an argument that connects problem pressure and politicization to learning in different labor market innovations. In short, we argue that learning efforts are most likely to impact on policy change if there is a certain problem pressure that clearly necessitates political action. On the other hand, if problem pressure is very low, or so high that governments need to react immediately, chances are low that learning impacts on policy change. The second part of our argument contends that learning impacts on policy change especially if a problem is not very politicized, i.e. there are no main conflicts concerning a reform, because then, solutions are wound up in the search for a compromise. Our results confirm our first hypothesis regarding the connection between problem pressure and policy learning. Governments learn indeed up to a certain degree of problem pressure. However, once political action becomes really urgent, i.e. in anti-crisis policies, there is no time and room for learning. On the other hand, learning occurred independently from the politicization of problem. In fact, in countries that have a consensual political system, learning occurred before the decision on a reform, whereas in majoritarian systems, learning happened after the adoption of a policy during the process of implementation.

<b>Dissemination Level</b>		
<b>PU</b>	Public	<b>XX</b>
<b>PP</b>	Restricted to other program participants	
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# Policy learning in Europe: Social policy and labour market reforms in 11 countries

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This report compares policy learning in 11 European countries. Specifically, we are connecting problem pressures and the politicisation of a given problem to policy learning and policy changes in different European countries and different clusters of social and labour market policies. This report is a synthesis of 11 country studies, which were conducted in the course of the INSPIRES research project, which is funded under the European Commission's 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Program. The project compares reforms of labour market and social policies in the following countries: Belgium, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK.

In this report, we are going to focus on policy learning. For each of the mentioned countries, a national team of experts drafted a country report, which examines a number of selected innovations in different areas of social and labour market policies and the role that policy learning played therein. The selection of innovations is based on the efforts of prior working packages, in which the same experts examined overall trends in social and labour market policies in the mentioned countries during the period from 2000 – 2013 and grouped them into six clusters, namely youth unemployment, older workers and extension of working life, disabled persons, governance, activation and flexibility and flexicurity. Based on this overview of labour market reforms, the national expert teams selected innovations and analysed their origin, implementation and the role of policy learning therein. This report, synthesizes the findings of the national expert reports and attempts a basic analysis of the dynamics that impede or favour policy learning being important for reforms.

In order to do this, we are going proceed as follows. In the next section, we will define policy learning and discuss its relation to policy change. Then, we are going to introduce to further elements that need to be taken into consideration to understand the impact of policy learning on reforms. These are economic and political problems pressures, as well as the politicization of a problem. After that, we will present the results of the comparison between the 11 country reports and analyse constellations, in which policy learning played an important role for policy change and when not. Conclusions follow.

## Learning and change

The main interest of this report is in policy learning and the conditions under which it has an impact on policy change. Policy learning has been an important element of the analysis of public policies for a long time. In his presentation of the famous advocacy coalition concept, Paul Sabatier refers to learning as part of “...the broader process of policy changes by analysing the manner in which elites from different advocacy coalitions gradually alter their belief systems over time, partially as a result of formal policy analysis and trial and error learning” (Sabatier 1988: 130). Already before, but especially after, learning has been subject to a vast number of analyses and been subject to different strands of research, which we have reviewed for the project in another report (Trein 2015).

Learning is mostly associated with policy change. For example, in his seminal article on policy paradigms, Peter Hall put forward three forms of policy change: First order changes, which entail the adaptation of existing instruments, second order changes that entail the adaptation of new policy instruments and third order changes, which comprise of a change in the hierarchy of policy instruments. Thereby, third order changes are similar to changes of the policy paradigm (P. A. Hall 1993: 278), which is the basic framework of ideas and standards according to which a social problem is interpreted and the policy made (P. A. Hall 1993: 279). More recent application of the framework have distinguished a fourth order change, which solely focuses on the the adaptation of overarching ideas, whereas changes in the hierarchy of instruments are considered as third order changes. The difference between a third order change according to Hall, and a third order change according to Falkner is that the latter regards third order change as the change of hierarchy in policy instruments, i.e. the technical aspects of policies, but not necessarily the broader ideas that guides a set of policy instruments. If the broader ideas

change, this would be fourth order change, according to Falkner. Gerda Falkner exemplifies the differences she defines between third and fourth order change with regard to EU anti-crisis policies (Falkner, 2015). Contrariwise, in his analysis of macroeconomic policy reform, Peter Hall interprets a change in the hierarchy in policy instruments as a paradigmatic change.

In this report, we try to dissociate learning from policy change. If policy changes, this does not mean that there has been learning in the sense that innovative ideas on how to solve a problem played an important role for formulating the contents of policy change. It could also be the case that actors only adapted a policy according to their electoral interests, or that there they learn politically only, namely to adapt their strategies to stay in power at the cost of not solving the actual problem.

For the purpose of this report, we need to clarify what we mean with learning. Although the literature on policy learning is vast, there is an important distinction that needs to be made with regard to learning. On the one hand, there is organizational and political learning. These concepts refer to the update of beliefs of individual or collective actors based on new ideas or a certain problem pressure, but with their own power interests in mind. In other words, learning means the adaptation of the strategy to remain in power or to retain political influence, also known as "powering" (Hecló 1974). In this case, policymakers would learn above all politically. For example, if a problem appears, decision makers would change their beliefs in a way that allows them to stay in power. Any solution to the problem they propose would above all guarantee them to maintain their political influence (Boswell 2009). On the other hand, the policy learning perspective assumes that policymakers are able to learn, and adapt their beliefs according to a problem that needs to be solved, rather than with respect to their want to stay in power (Bennett and Howlett 1992; Daviter 2015; Gilardi et al. 2009; May 1992). In other words, policymakers prioritize problem solving over powering (Hoppe 2011). This way of learning can occur in a number of ways:

1. Firstly, evidence for new policies can be generated from research that has been undertaken abroad or domestically. Such research can for example take the form of pilot programs, experiments or simple statistical simulations (Martin and Sanderson 1999).

2. Secondly, learning can take the form of updating beliefs based on policy experience in other countries or at home. For example policies in the same field that were implemented abroad or experiences of similar instruments in different policies domestically (Gilardi 2010). Other than conducting research before putting a policy into place, this way of learning is often based on trial and error principle, which can – at times – have significant social and economic consequences (C. M. Hall 2011).
3. Thirdly, learning can occur as a consequence of the influence of international actors, such as the EU. In the European case, there are a number of binding guidelines, but also processes aiming to foster policy learning amongst member states, such as the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) (Zeitlin et al. 2005). However, due to possible financial returns that might be attached to the compliance with these procedures, it is difficult to judge the line between voluntary learning and the compliance with rules.

In this report, we want to understand under which conditions policy change occurs due to policy learning, and under which conditions, it happens as a consequence of political learning, or for political reasons only, such as symbolic policymaking. Therefore, we contrast political learning with policy learning for analytical purposes. The term “policy learning” refers to knowledge, whereas “political learning” accounts for learning that concerns political interests. Contrasting these two concepts in this way is an ideal-typical approach, in the Weberian sense of the term (Weber 1980), and in the reality of political processes, there is always a mixture of these two forms of learning. Nevertheless, we argue that opposing these two types of learning is important, because it permits to disentangle the relationship of problem-solving and politics with regard to the impact of learning on policy change. Some more recent contributions to the policy learning literature have warned to not underestimate the politicization of policy learning, notably because academics tend to overestimate the impact of research and new ideas compared to political interests. (Boswell 2009; Champion 2013; Daviter 2015: 499). This is all the more plausible, given that conducting policy related research, such as pilot projects or experiments for labour market reforms, needs resources, time and stable contextual conditions. Yet, the political business in modern democracies is fast moving, and windows of opportunity open and close quickly. Therefore, it is not all understood that research results are available when needed and that the political agenda can be planned according

to a learning process. Therefore, the environment of everyday politics does not necessarily provide these conditions: It is possible that policies change without learning that is based on substantive evidence playing a role. In order to understand the impact of learning on policy change, it is important to keep in mind that there are differences between policy learning and change. Whereas it is difficult to imagine policy learning without any change, changes in public policies can come along without policy learning. In fact, policy learning is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for policy change.

In the following, we are going to discuss conditions that might impact on whether policy learning affects policy change, or if rather political factors, such as political learning impacts on the change of a policy. Given that this report focuses on a number of very different reforms in different political and institutional contexts, we argue that two broadly conceived factors are important: problem pressure and the overall politicization of a problem.

## Problem pressure and politicisation

Although the political science literature has emphasized the importance of the connection between learning and change, policies can change due to high problem pressure without an actual learning happening (Bennett and Howlett 1992; Champion 2013), such as in times of crisis when politicians need to find quick solutions to urgent problems (Braun 2013). Another problem regarding the impact of learning is the politicisation of issues. This can either lead to policy change without a high problem pressure being present, for example when politicians want to demonstrate that they “do something”. Doing nothing would be the worst option possible, because this would signal that a politician is incapable in reacting to a crisis (Bonoli 2012). On the other hand, the implementation of innovative ideas into new policies might be impeded due to electoral interests, special interest politics or simple institutional inertia.

### Problem pressure

Problems are an important element to trigger any learning process, because they stimulate interests in topics. From policy-makers’ point of view, an issue needs to be problematic in order to be of common interest and demand regulative or redistributive action. Therefore, a certain socio-economic problem pressure should be present, in order to stimulate a learning process regarding a certain policy, such as social policy or

educational policy for example (P. A. Hall 1993). Regarding labour market and social policies in the EU, a number of problem pressures appeared that should trigger learning processes. Firstly, the demographic development has an impact on the problem pressure on pension systems. Aging populations, lower birth rates and longer life expectancy have necessitated to reform pension systems, i.e. by reducing the possibilities for early retirement and to increase the retirement age in general. Secondly, in some countries unemployment rates are higher than in others, especially youth unemployment varies greatly between the European economies. Thirdly, economic and fiscal dynamics have put pressure on policymakers. Since the 1990s, many OECD countries with mature welfare states have entered a period of budget consolidation, which puts pressure on government finances to further adapt social policies (Wagschal and Wenzelburger 2008). The economic and financial crisis after 2008 has aggravated this problem even more and increased fiscal pressures on the welfare state.

Then, European countries face a number of political pressures that possibly affect learning and policy change. Notably, there is the common fiscal policy, notably the Maastricht treaties, which created debt and deficit limits for EU members. During the financial and economic crisis, these regulations have been tightened again, in the light of the ongoing crisis of the European economy. Notably, these regulations put some pressures on labour market and social policies, because they diminish the leverage of social policies even more, particularly when it comes to spending. Whereas before the crisis many states, notably France and Germany, implemented the fiscal rules of the Maastricht treaties not strict enough, this has become more difficult now. More importantly, the creation of the Euro and the transfer of monetary sovereignty to the European Central Bank by 19 EU-members have taken away the possibility to autonomously adjust to economic problem pressures using instruments of monetary policy. Consequently, governments of Euro-states need to adjust internally (as opposed to external, monetary adjustment) to economic and fiscal problem pressure (Walter forthcoming), which impacts on the capacity to learn as well as the options for policy change that are available.

However, there are also softer incentives to policy learning in the EU, namely through the instruments that are based on the OMC (Open Method of Coordination). This instruments entails mutual review of policies in the member states and aims at stimulating mutual



learning between EU members by peer-reviews, benchmarks and other indicators that allow to compare the countries' solutions to employment and other social problems. The goal of this instrument is not to coordinate policies in the sense to reach agreements and common commitments, but it aims at policy adjustment by learning from other countries rather than enforceable agreements to one another or the European principle (Zeitlin et al. 2005). Financial incentives at the EU level come into play rather indirectly, for example through projects that are funded by the European Social Fund (ESF).

The relationship between problem pressure and learning, we argue, goes in two ways. On the one hand, a certain problem pressure needs to be present in order for learning to take place. If everything works well, why should there be a search for better solutions, unless it is for political reasons? However, learning takes time, especially if it is considered as learning in an academic sense. To create substantive evidence on alternative solutions needs patience, resources and somehow stable conditions. However, the economic and the political environments might change quickly and there could be no more time for learning. For example, in times of political and economic crises, solutions need to be found, but often there is no time to learn based on substantive evidence. In these cases, policy change occurs in the sense of trial and error and decision makers tend to rely on cognitive shortcuts, such as big countries or ideologically similar governments. Consequently, too high problem pressure should reduce the effect of policy learning on formulating institutions, at least in its academic sense and learning becomes a trial and error game in reality, with potentially far-reaching economic and social consequences.

### Politicisation

The politicisation of problems and solutions is the second element that we need to consider in order to understand the impact of policy learning on change. Other than originating in evidence-based ideas for better solutions, policymakers might adapt policies, mainly with their political interests in mind. This does not mean that there is no evidence-based learning, but it might be the case that such information is ignored, or used to primarily satisfy political interests rather than to solve a problem (Boswell 2009; Goldstein and Keohane 1993). Thereby, it is important to keep in mind that policymakers suggest and implement new policies, claiming that they are “new” and “better” without this being substantially proven by independent evidence. Often, this is not possible or not feasible, due to constraints of time and resources. However, even if there is some

substantive evidence available for better solutions, or could be produced with reasonable time and resources, reforms might be implemented anyway without learning – or innovative ideas might be used differently than intended, or only implemented partially for political reasons. It is important to consider this politicization of problems in order to understand policy change. (Daviter 2015, 499)

However, how might the politicisation of problems impact on policy change? Politicisation means that a problem is subject to political contestation, mostly between stakeholders, such as interest groups, political parties or the bureaucracy. Rather than changing a policy according to the idea that provides the “best” or “most promising” solution to solve a given problem, decision-makers seek to find a solution that best serves their electoral interests. In case of social policies, this can be to not cut benefits due to political reasons and to maintain high benefits, as it happens in the case of health care policies (Hacker 2004). On the other hand, politicization might also entail symbolic action, for example by implementing reforms that are not necessary, or by avoiding unpopular solutions due to political reasons. In such a case, problem solving oriented learning, based on research, might get a raw deal, due to political and ideological interests. In other words, policymakers adapt solutions in a way that it does not endanger their political interests (Pierson 1994). For example, left parties would tend to favour redistributive policies, because they are convinced that this is the best idea, even if there is evidence suggesting a better solution. Of course, such a strategy is closely intertwined with party’s electoral interests (Armingeon 2012). On the other hand, it is also possible that policymakers chose unpopular measures, because they want to solve a certain problem, and care less about electoral consequences, such as it happened with the reform of unemployment and social assistance (colloquially known as Hartz IV reform) in Germany (Fleckenstein 2008).

In this context, institutions are important, because in some countries, the political system requires finding a consensus amongst different actors, i.e. interest groups need being heard formally, there are two parliamentary chambers or there is a very active constitutional court. In this case, we would expect that learning take a secondary role in the formulation of decisions, because there are many interests that need to be taken into account. However, this does not necessarily need to happen. There might be learning based policy change, despite many institutional veto points. In such a case only the likelihood increases considerably that a problem will be politicised. However, the

literature on institutional change in social policies has shown that governments learn above all politically, because they try to adopt policies in a way that protects their electoral interests (Hacker 2005; Pierson 1994).

Regarding social and labour market policies, there are three ways in which policies might be politicized:

1. The first one is the partisan arena. Left and right parties ought to have different opinions on reforming social policies, which might impact on the influence of evidence and learning on policy solutions. On the other hand, parties might in general agree on a solution, i.e. left and right parties support the increase of the retirement age (Schmidt 1996).
2. Secondly, interest groups, especially social partners are important. Generally speaking, unions should support more generous social policies whereas employers ought to be in favour of less regulated labour markets. This assumptions are generally known, however, they might condition the impact of learning on policy change, because these actors have the interest to influence solutions in their proper interest. What is more, the country reports show that the mentioned actors have their own research centres in many of the countries under observation in this report and might therefore commission their own research and evidence that supports their point of view. On the other hand, they might also learn and change their opinion on certain policy aspects. Evidently, the adaptation of existing beliefs on policies is more likely concerning secondary aspects than actual policy beliefs, which favours small, but no big changes of policies (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999: 145).
3. Thirdly, political institutions can shape policy learning. Specifically the difference between the consensual or majoritarian institutions might have an impact on how learning happens (Hemerijck and Visser 2003: 22). Thereby, we are arguing that in consensual political systems, learning should occur before a reform is implemented whereas in majoritarian institutions it is the other way around. The reason for this is that consensual political systems, learning occurs together, i.e. through social pacts. Then, many of the main actors in the political system, i.e. parties, interest groups and ministries bring along their own knowledge from their

own learning tools and processes.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, learning occurs as a part of the consensus-building process. Thereby, actors need to be convincing, which is why they might need to present well researched arguments, possibly ones that are grounded on policy related research. Contrariwise, consensual institutions could dilute a preformed solution through excessive politicisation of a problem and consensus formation. In this case, a solution might be politically feasible, but not very effective, or even detrimental, from a problem-solving approach. On the other hand, in majoritarian political systems government can decide alone. Therefore, learning might occur after the implementation of a reform, mostly during the evaluation process.

To sum up, in this section we discussed possible elements that might stimulate and impede the impact of policy learning on policy changes. We have argued that problem pressure, either of socio-economic or political origin, might impact on whether learning takes place and how it influences policy change. Particularly, we put forward the points that there needs to be some problem pressure in order to stimulate learning, but that too high problem pressure impedes the impact of learning on the changes of policies, because then there is no time to implement the “best” solution for the common good. What is more, we held that party differences and interest groups, as well as consensual institutions impact on how of learning affects policy change.

## Results: Learning and policy change

In the following section, we are going to analyse the impact of policy learning, problem pressures and issue politicisation on labour market and social policy reforms in 11 European countries. As mentioned before, the empirical basis for these reports are the country reports on labour market and social policy innovations that national expert teams conducted. Each team was provided with a template that contained guidelines regarding the information that needed to be collected for the reports. Each of the country teams analysed learning in three innovations from different clusters that were selected from a large overview of reforms.

In the following, we are going to discuss the comparative results in three sections. Firstly,

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<sup>1</sup> We discuss the learning tools and processes of each country in D5.4.

we are going to evaluate how problem pressure induced learning and give examples from the case studies that show under which conditions problem pressure sparked learning processes by politicians and governments. In the second part of the first subsection, we are going to outline under which circumstances problem pressure leads to policy change, but without involving learning processes. In the second part of this report, we are going to explain how learning plays a role in agenda setting and decision-making of labour market and social policies. In the third section, we are going to outline how the politicisation of problems impedes that learning effects influence on solutions and how political agenda's impacted policy change rather than learning and problem solving. A systematic overview of all innovations and the learning that was attached to them can be found in the annex of this report.

### Problem pressure and learning

The relation between policy learning and problem pressure can take two forms. Firstly, problem pressure can ignite policy learning, because there needs to be some sort of unsolved issue that is relevant for policymakers and that needs addressing in order to improve the common good. Secondly, problem pressure can also be problematic for policy learning, especially when it is very high, for example when the economic situation necessitates immediate reaction by policymakers and there is no time to seek and evaluate the best solution before implementing a major reform.

#### Problem pressure can be conducive to learning

The first result that we can retrieve from the comparative analysis of the country reports of work package five is that there is a connection between problem pressure and learning, in the sense that changes in the socio-economic or political environment triggered learning processes of policymakers and stakeholders that searched for new solutions to problems, taking into account evidence that is for example based on statistical analysis, pilot projects or independent expertise.

This connection between problem pressure and learning can be found particularly with regard to the reform of pension systems in European countries. For example, in Germany, interest groups, political parties and members of the administration realized already in the 1990s that the German "culture of early retirement" needs to be reformed in order to keep the pension system sustainable. Consequently, a search for solutions began, which

was followed by a number of adaptations of the pension system. Similarly so in the Netherlands and in Belgium. Dutch governments began to understand during the 1990s, that the country's pension system needs to be changed, however it took until 2008 for the governments to start a reform process, because the crisis opened a new window of opportunity (Aa et al. 2015). Belgium is another example, where increasing problem pressure, i.e. aging population, triggered a learning process. Interestingly however, the EU played a relatively important role in the Belgian case, notably through its Europe 2020 strategy, which set a target employment rate for the elderly. Following the suggestions by the EU commission, the Di Rupo government created a commission for pension reform that sought to find solutions on how to improve the employability of pensioners.

A second example where problem pressure triggered learning processes are in the area of minimum wages, in Germany, but also in the UK. In Germany, the coverage of successfully closed collective bargaining agreements reduced gradually since the mid-1990s and there was a considerable difference in wages coverages between East and West Germany. As a consequence, unions and also the social democratic party put the matter on the political agenda. However, before the reform could be implemented, a learning process took place, as we will explain in the following section. Regarding the UK, the issue of a national minimum wage entered the national political agenda during the 1980s, due to the rising insecurities on the labour market following liberalisation reforms as well as increasing globalisation and its impact on the domestic labour market. Yet, after the problem had been put on the political agenda, learning occurred. Especially, there were a number of evaluations also based on the experience in the U.S., before the Labour party put the problem on its political agenda.

A third example for problem pressure triggering policy learning is youth employment, which became obvious studying innovations in three countries, notably Italy, Sweden, and Switzerland. Beginning with the latter, the Swiss economy went through a shortage of training places for young pupils in the 1990s, which triggered a learning and the assessment of new options for training unemployed youth. In Sweden, the number of unemployed youth increased considerably following the 2000s. This problem pressure caused some learning effects, for example the search for new ideas abroad. In that context, policymakers took inspiration from abroad, notably the idea regarding the job guarantee for youth program, which aimed at training young unemployed and to place them in jobs

was inspired by similar experiences in Denmark and the UK. Another example for learning processes that followed youth unemployment can be found in Italy. In this case, the main problem was a lack of transfer of young adults from apprenticeships to the labour market, which led to a number of adaptations of the apprenticeship program for young adults, notably in 2003, 2011 and 2013. The ideas for the 2003 reform were taken from the French model of tertiary higher education, whereas during the crisis, policymakers turned to Germany in order to gather ideas to reform the Italian system of apprenticeships.

Then there is a second form of problem pressure, which has been conducive to government learning, in the sense that helped to put certain problems on the national political agendas. Notably, this was the impact of soft political pressure coming out of EU governance, notably the participation in OMCs. For example the Belgian pension reform, as well as the youth employment plan was incentivized not only by the problem pressures, but also EU guidelines. Similarly in Spain, the EU put some issues on the agenda, i.e. the active insertion program, which was defined following EU guidelines in 2000 and then fully established in 2006. The same occurred with regard to the Italian reform of public employment services.

#### Too high problem pressure impedes learning efforts

However, problem pressure does not necessarily lead to policy learning, but can also have the contrary effect, namely to impede learning by policy makers. Notably, this is the case when problems are very pressing, for example unemployment rises very fast, or debts in social insurances are too high and immediate action is necessary. In this case, policymakers want to implement solutions quickly and there is a tendency to less impact of learning. The intention of quick reactions are first of all to solve the problem, but policy makers want also to present themselves as being active in times of crisis. In these situations, there is little time for learning. Consequently, the door is open for politically rather, or even “panic driven” than problem-oriented solutions.

This relationship between problem pressure and the absence of learning is one that we can observe during the global financial and economic crisis as well as its aftermaths. Most notably in that sense are the examples for labour market reforms in Greece. High problem pressure is obvious in the Greek case, notably extremely high unemployment rates,

unsustainable debt and insufficient social benefits. What is more, there is considerable political pressure from the European Central Bank, the EU Commission and the IMF to adapt labour market and social policies in order to meet fiscal aims. This context has led to number of far reaching reforms. Notably, these adjustments were temporal employment for public benefit, which provided job seekers with a temporary job that allowed them for example to clean streets. A second reform entails a voucher scheme to finance temporary training of unemployed in private companies that was set up in 2011. The third reform was an increase of the full retirement age, which entered into force in 2015. In all of these reforms, learning did not seem to play an important role, although the contents of these reforms had been put on the agenda of Greek policymakers a long time ago, either by recommendations from the EU or the OECD. We could argue that just because these reforms were implemented during the crisis, policy learning is present. However, rather than learning from convincing evidence, policymakers complied with the "suggestions" of external actors, since it guaranteed the continuation of funds and loans to be paid. However, these policies were not subject to trials or other evidence-building in Greece itself before they were put into legislation. In other words, many of the crisis policies came into effect as a consequence of compliance, rather than voluntary learning, as it had been applied in the OMC. The policies implemented in Greece were not the result of a diligent learning process, but followed the model given by the IMF, and the EU, without testing whether they would yield the desired results, in the Greek context. For the Greek governments, the choice was to follow externally suggested policies, or to risk being excluded from the cash-flow of the Eurozone, with detrimental economic and social consequences.

Spain is another example of labour market reforms in times of tight crisis pressures. Notably, the temporary assistance scheme to support reinsertion in the job market as well as the strategy to encourage entrepreneurship and self-employment for young unemployed is examples of change without learning. Both measures came into force in the context of extremely high unemployment, especially youth unemployment during the crisis. Particularly the temporary assistance scheme (in the PREPARA programme) is an interesting illustration of policy change without learning, because decision makers decided to implement it despite the fact that a previous similar programme had had a low impact. Subsequent evaluations of the program showed that it had a weak impact on reinserting recipients into the labour market. The strategy to encourage



entrepreneurship and self-employment followed EU-strategies on youth employment. Hungary shows similar dynamics during the crisis, when the government implemented a pathway to work scheme (2009) and a new labour code (2011). Both reforms did not originate in policy learning efforts, but only the pressure of the crisis on the national economy. Policy learning in the sense that experiments were conducted or the experience of other countries was profoundly evaluated did not count for the adoption of the reform. For example regarding the labour code, which weakened the Hungarian Unions even further, only legal questions were important for the government.

The reports show also instances of learning after reforms had been implemented. In these cases, governments identified a problem pressure, implemented a solution and evaluated and adapted the policies after that. This occurred for example in Switzerland. The country's economy went through a recession during the early 1990s, which came along with a reduction of available places for apprenticeships for young people. In 2002, the national parliament adopted a revision of the existing Vocational Education and Training law, which entailed amongst others a centralisation of the existing regulations regarding vocational training. The solution for the law was based on suggestions made by expert commissions, however there were no pilot projects etc. Learning from experts occurred after the implementation of the law, in the course of an evaluation in 2007. The report on labour market reforms in Sweden observed a similar dynamic, notably regarding the adaptation of activity compensation and the reform of youth employment legislation. In 2007, the government reformed eligibility for activity compensation from 19-30 years, but eligibility conditions became stricter. Notably, the benefits were related to some paid work and assessment conditions became tighter. Learning occurred during the process of policy implementation. For example, in 2008, trials with private actors were introduced and in 2011, an evaluation demonstrated that although application rates had doubled, placement rates remained low. A similar structure occurred with regard to the job guarantee program for the youth, which was created in 2006, due to a high rate of unemployed youth. The ideas for the program originated in other countries, for example in Denmark and the UK. However, trials were not made, but the program was evaluated after implementation.

*However, the reports reveal a number of instances, in which the crisis impacted not only negatively on learning efforts of governments. The first example is Italy, notably the reform*

of the Italian apprenticeship system, where learning occurred during the crisis, although in a very inconsistent way. In 2003, the Italian government had decided to adapt its system according to the French model of tertiary higher education. However, this changed in the course of the crisis, when the “expert government” under Monti implemented a dual apprenticeship program allowing for young Italians to apply to apprenticeships in Germany. At the same time, the government undertook a fact finding mission to Germany. However, these efforts were not continued under the Renzi government. The Netherlands are a second example where the crisis had an important impact on policy change and the implementation of learning therein, namely the adaptation of the retirement age. Since the 1990s, the EU and the OECD had suggested that the Dutch governments need to increase the retirement age, but elected officials had not dared to do so, due to political obstacles. After 2008, a new commission (Bakker Commission) underlined again the necessity for the government to adapt, and the context of economic insecurity and higher government debt changed public opinion. Eventually, in 2015, retirement age could be increased from 65 to 67 years.

To sum up, our analysis shows that problem pressure can lead to learning, but also impede learning processes, especially when the context necessitates immediate action. In order to stimulate learning processes before an actual reform is made, there needs to be some kind of problem pressure, in order for a problem to rise onto the agenda and to trigger political action. This can be socio-economic or political pressures, with the latter coming for example from the EU and a country’s participation in OMCs. On the other hand, if problem pressure is high, governments need to react quickly and there is no time for learning. This dynamic became especially obvious during the crisis and the anti-crisis policies in Southern Europe. On the other hand, the crisis also created windows of opportunity to implement learning-based solutions, which could not be put into place before, due to unfavourable political circumstances.

### Forms of learning

As we discussed it in the previous section, learning is part of the reform processes in European labour market and social policies, however its impact on the change of policies depends on problem pressure as well as on the politicization of a certain problem. So far, we have analysed how and why problem pressure was positive and negative for policy learning. In this section, we are going to outline different forms of learning that we found

in the country report, before turning to political obstacles against learning in the next section.

There were various forms of policy learning that played a role for agenda setting, formulation of solutions, decision making as well as implementation of reforms. In the following, we are going to list a number of ways in which policy learning occurred, without any order of importance.

1. *Statistical information:* The first and most common way of policy learning is by means of statistical information and modelling of expected future developments of economic and demographic figures. In many of the country reports that we received, the experts report that learning occurred by means of statistics, for example information about labour market development, demographic evolution and data on public finances. Based on these information, governments and other actors use simple statistical analyses as well as more complicated econometric modelling in order to predict future developments and adapt existing policy instruments accordingly. A prominent example for this type of learning occurred in the field of pension policy and the adaptation of the retirement age.
2. *Expert consultation:* This is a very broad category of learning, which includes all kinds of expert involvement in the process of reforming social and labour market policies. Nowadays, consulting experts has become a standard procedure in public policy. However, there is a very wide variety of who can be an expert, and more importantly stakeholders with political interests nominate their own experts. Consequently, it is important to question the background of expert reports that are being used by various actors, due to possible political affiliations. Notably, expertise commissioned by political parties, trade unions, employer organisations and other interest groups, as well as the government itself play an important role for reforms, but it is necessary to scrutinize them for a possible political bias. Expert reports that were put forward by more independent actors, such as parliamentary research services or independent experts are likely to be more objective than research that has been explicitly commissioned by a political stakeholder.
3. *Expert commissions:* Expert commissions are a subgroup of expert involvement, which played an important role, notably for the reform of pension systems in

Continental European welfare states. Often, former politicians or well-known experts take the lead of the commission. Members of the commissions are representatives of the most important political parties as well as interest groups. The goal of setting up these commissions is to canalize conflicts and ensure a combination of expertise and political negotiation regarding important and politicized issues, such as pension reforms. Since the commissions combine factional expertise and political interests, policymakers hope that they come up with suggestions that are suitable for a compromise. Examples for these commissions are the Süssmuth Commission and the Rürup Commission for the reform of the German pension system. Examples from other European countries are the Bakker and the DeVries Commissions in the Netherlands, as well as the Belgium pension reform commission.

4. *Pilots*: Pilots are another way of how learning can occur in the reform process. In this case, implementation of a reform is important for actual decision making. In its ideal form, policy makers set up a number of pilots that test a planned reform before it is being implemented nationwide. These kind of learning instrument is focused on application, the problem is that it needs time until pilots have been set up and are evaluated. However, in the everyday business of policymaking, time is scarce and therefore policymakers do not wait for the full evaluation of a pilot until they decide about a law, or implement it despite a pilot program that was not successful. The country reports on policy learning report that governments set up pilots in order to gain knowledge on the implementation of a policy rather than to decide for or against a reform. For example, regarding the implementation of activity compensations for disabled youth, the Swedish government conducted a number of pilot programs. Similarly, in the Netherlands, experiments provided some insights on the implementation of the participation law, which integrated social assistance, the sheltered employment act for disabled workers and the benefits for unemployed who became disabled before they had turned 18. In Switzerland, the implementation of the 5<sup>th</sup> revision of the invalidity insurance improved the possibility for private providers to demand financing for pilot projects, which were afterwards evaluated by the federal government.
5. *Learning from own experience*: Learning from own experience means that governments learn from successful or unsuccessful policies in their own country.

This type of learning is different from pilots, because there are no test trials or experiments, but policies were adapted since they did not fulfil their purpose or were too expensive. Usually, this kind of learning entails the adaptation of a policy after an evaluation project. For example, the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> revision of the Swiss invalidity insurance entail this kind of learning. Such learning is very common and different from learning by trials or experiments that were conducted before deciding or implementing a policy, as updating of ideas occurred after a policy had been fully implemented. A special case of learning from own experience is law on an overall minimum wage, in Germany. Before the overall minimum wage, which was decided in 2015, found the support of the two main parties and the unions, existing minimum wages in some sectors were evaluated. Once it was sufficiently researched that minimum wages did not reduce the number of jobs available, the conservative Christian Democratic Party agreed to the reform.<sup>2</sup>

6. *Learning from other countries:* Another form of learning focuses on experiences of other countries. This way of learning is closely connected to the previous point. The main difference between the two is however that new ideas are explicitly taken from other countries. In EU-governance, this type of learning has been institutionalized with the establishment of the OMC, which aims at facilitating learning amongst EU member states. In the reports on policy learning, which we produced in the INSPIRES-project, there were some instances of learning in the sense that ideas were taken from other countries, however, without explicitly referencing to the OMC. Some of the examples mentioned in the text were that Greece, Italy and Spain tried to learn from Germany in the field of youth unemployment during the crisis. In Sweden, ideas for the job guarantee program for the youth came from similar programs, in Denmark and the UK. The Dutch participation law was inspired by experiences in Belgium and Germany and ideas on the decentralization of welfare services came from Sweden. The German minimum wage law was heavily influenced by the British legislation – policymakers and experts undertook several fact finding missions to the UK. The Swiss government took ideas from an Australian and Canadian project on the reintegration of handicapped individuals in the labour market and the reports mention several instances of U.S. experiences inspiring reform in European

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<sup>2</sup> Another reason was that other sectorial minimum wage projects failed.

countries.

7. *Learning from subnational governments:* Learning occurred not only between governments, but also between subnational governments. Particularly, there are two examples for this. Firstly, in Switzerland, learning between cantonal governments is an important feature of the invalidity insurance, because the cantonal invalidity insurance offices are responsible for the implementation process. Implementation practices vary between cantons, and the national office for social insurances tries to facilitate an exchange of practices between the various cantonal offices, in order to improve overall performance of the invalidity insurance. There has been a similar dynamic regarding the introduction of case management in vocational training. In Belgium, the reforms of the national job monitoring schemes were based on experiences in the Flemish region.
8. *Learning from international actors:* Eventually, the reports discussed learning from international actors. On the one hand, non-binding EU guidelines and strategies played important roles in this regard, for example in Belgium, but also in Spain. Yet, regarding the influence of the EU, it is always important to distinguish the influence of ideas from financial incentives. Countries might change policies according to European guidelines in order to have better conditions for receiving financial support, rather than adapting their own policies. Another important element is the OECD. Its reports are mentioned as important sources for national governments when it comes to the evaluation of their policies and instruments. However, the actual influence of the country-specific recommendations on policy outputs are not always clear.

To conclude, there is a variety of ways in how governments learn. These entail learning from others and own experiences as well as from international actors and organisations. Concerning the method of learning, statistical information is very important, as well as expert participation and commissions, although the latter two are more vulnerable to political influence. Experiments and pilots are important, but especially for the implementation of policies. Oftentimes, governments decide about a policy, and commission experiments and pilots afterwards. If the experiment is conducted before and fails, it might happen that a policy is being changed anyways. Time seems to be of crucial importance for learning. We only see a strong impact of learning – understood as the implementation of new ideas that are certainly proven to work – if there is enough time

to conduct research. Often, this is however not the case as decision makers are unable and/or unwilling to wait for a solution to be ripe according to the standards of scientific evidence, since windows of opportunity for decision-making open and close. Therefore, learning seems to play an important role in the implementation phase of a policy.

### Politicisation and learning

Our results have shown that learning processes have been a part of labour market and social policies adaptation in Europe. Whether these learning processes have led to policy change – or were included therein – depends on the problem pressure in a certain policy field. A second element that is important for whether learning has an effect on policy change is the politicisation of a problem, namely whether a reform proposal needs to pass political deadlocks. In these cases, solutions that have been found to be useful by independent experts might be changed considerably, in order to pass a process of consensus finding. Another form of politicization entails political learning – actors use innovative ideas primarily to improve their political strategy. Rather than only focusing on policy change, parties and interest groups seek to find ways to reform policies and to stay in power at the same time; in case of doubt, they would however prioritize their own interests (Boswell 2009; Pierson 1994). On the other hand, there might be a lot of symbolic action, namely that unnecessary or even damaging policies are put into place for political reasons, i.e. to seek electoral support.

The mentioned dynamics have influenced reforms in the countries that we observed. For example in Germany, the project of implementing a nationwide minimum wage took a long time before it became a law, notably due to the consensual elements in the national political system, such as the connection between parties and organized interests, and parliamentary bicameralism. Although evidence was available from abroad (UK) and domestically contending that a minimum wage was very unlikely to have negative effects on the job market, it took a long time until the reform was finally implemented. The adaptation of early retirement age is a similar example. In this case, there were a number of gradual reforms, in Germany, which slowly adjusted the retirement age from the late 1990s until 2013. The fact that the German retirement age could not be sustained was already known before 1995. However, due to political reasons governments decided not to adapt retirement age immediately and abruptly.

In Belgium and the Netherlands, retirement age and pension reforms have faced similar

challenges. In Belgium, the “Generation Pact” (2005), which was a major reform of the pension system, as it created benefits for labour market re-entry, is politically still contested. Similarly, the augmentation of the pension age in 2012 was not free from political conflict; however, backed by the argument of the pension reform commission, the right-wing government pushed the reform through parliament without a lot of consultation. What is more, in the Belgium case, EU commission reports seemed to have impacted the reform considerably. In the Netherlands, increasing the retirement age was on the political agenda since the late 1990s, but a reform compromise could only be found in 2013 and 2015. Until then, parties that put an augmentation of the retirement age on the political agenda had suffered devastating losses in popularity and the issue had become like a red rag for a bull to the electorate. This time of politicisation ended during the crisis.

The reform projects of the Swiss invalidity insurance are another example for how politicisation of a problem impeded policy learning. In 1999, a reform failed in a popular vote, which had entailed some measures to deal early on with the high debts in the invalidity insurance. In order to adapt, three other reforms followed. Firstly, a reform that tightened controls for the cantonal insurance offices and aimed at creating unified standards, in 2004. Secondly, in 2008, the invalidity insurance changed when preventive and early detection instruments became the primary instrument of intervention, and decisions for pensions took only a secondary role. Thirdly, in 2012, budget consolidation in the invalidity insurance was put forward. The fact that a first reform attempt failed led to more profound measures including a strong focus on re-integration and prevention efforts.

These examples show what we already know about the relationship between politicisation and institutional change, namely that highly politicised policies are unlikely to change, because stakeholders defend their interests and returns. However, with regard to policy learning these findings imply that countries with more veto players and institutional veto structures tend to slow down the learning process and politicise problems. This is particularly obvious regarding the reform of the retirement age in the Netherlands. In this case, it was clear that a change was necessary, but due to electoral interests, policymakers avoided reforms until the crisis provided a window of opportunity. However, in Switzerland and Germany, the reform of the introduction of the



minimum wage and the invalidity insurance reforms are open to different interpretations. Firstly, in Germany, there was no majority for policy change until evidence was absolutely convincing that a national minimum wage would not have negative effects on the economy – and other options for sector wide minimum wage agreements were not possible. In Switzerland, the failure of a reform in 1999 triggered a number of profound reforms, notably taking into account preventive and re-integrative measures before cutting the budget of the invalidity insurance. Clearly, both cases entail evidence for political learning, because policymakers sought for strategies to adapt and stay in control. However, the demands for consensus slowed the political process down and created also time to propose alternative solution and evidence that could later on be used on the reform process.

The counterfactual to this interpretation is that in countries with less veto points, reforms can be passed faster. This implies for learning that a less politicised problem should lead to better learning effects, because reforms are not being slowed down. However, on the other hand, due to the lack of counter-majoritarian elements, governments can rather push their own projects through, which might open the door for solutions that are in the interest of political parties rather than the common good. Examples for these findings are the Swedish program that entailed a job guarantee for young unemployed, which was based on research conducted by organizations that are close to the governing right-wing party. Similarly, the reform of the British pathway to work program, which has been sold by the first Cameron government as being “all new,” but in fact it resembled closely to the previous program. But the rather broad majority allowed the government to present a solution that it could claim to be all-new and make symbolic reforms.

Two other examples are the Greek anti-crisis policies and the Hungarian pathway to work scheme, although they originate in entirely different political motives. Many of the reforms in Greece are motivated by external pressure, but also by the goal to attain electoral support. For example the temporal work program that was created in 2011 by the Papandreou government against the opposition of the conservative party. The program hired recipients for five to seven months for public work. The idea for the program originated in Greece and was financed by the European Social Fund. Later on Syriza successfully politicised this problem. A second example is the pathway to work program that the Hungarian government put into place, as of 2009. The program allows

government to put unemployed who can work into a general work scheme, which is needs-based and forces recipients to cooperate if they want to keep their benefits, and forces them to do public work. The reform passed parliament despite the fact that there was ample evidence that these programs have no effect on regular labour market reintegration, as they generated electoral support.

To sum up, this section has shown that the politicisation of problems impedes the effect of learning on policy change, for example because governments have electoral interests. A second reason that can reduce the impact of learning in the reform process is the need to build a broad consensus. However, the results show also that consensual institutions create a favourable environment for learning, because they slow down the decision making process and create time for research on solutions before a reform is being put into legislation. Otherwise, governments tend to quickly respond to problems and learning follows after that during the implementation process. In other words, politicization might be positive, as it creates the time for learning.

## Conclusion

In this report, we compared the findings of 11 country reports that analysed the adaptation of labour market and social policy reforms and the role of learning therein. We started our analysis, with two main hypotheses, namely that the impact of learning depends on problem pressures and the politicisation of a given problem. Particularly, we hold that very high or very low problem pressure as well as a considerable politicisation of a problem have negative effects on policy learning. Our empirical results partly confirm our hypotheses, but provide also some interesting results that do not match with our theoretical expectations.

1. As expected, problem pressure has positive and negative effects on policy learning. In order to trigger a learning process that might potentially impact on reforms, some kind of problem pressure – economical, demographical, or political – needs to be present. Yet, if the problem pressure becomes too high, policy makers tend to favour fast solutions, which reduce the capacity and possibility for a learning-based result, at least prior to the decision about a given policy. These kinds of dynamics have become apparent during the crisis, especially in Southern European countries, when governments implemented fundamental reforms very

quickly, without assessing their potential impact beforehand. The reasons for this are obviously the immense economic and political pressure, which have however impeded on learning. Yet, the crisis has also positive effects regarding the connection between learning and policy pressure, because the crisis context created windows of opportunity for policy change.

2. The reports revealed different forms of learning, which can be divided into three types of learning:
  - a. Firstly, there is **imposed learning** or compliance. This entails that countries change policy as a consequence of external political pressure rather than the adaptation of preferences and beliefs due to factual knowledge and research input.
  - b. Secondly, there is **observational learning**. This entails policy learning based on the observation and experiences of other countries, subnational governments but also from international actors. The differences to imposed learning is that there is no power involved, in the sense that policy changes occur as a consequences of observation of others rather than by the imposition of new ideas.
  - c. **Intentional learning** is the third form of learning that can be retrieved from this research. Notably, it comprises of learning from statistical information, experts, but also pilots and econometric models. The impact of learning in the policy process differs. Experts are often heard before a law is actually decided whereas pilots and experiments are being consulted prior to the implementation of a policy.
3. The third finding is that the politicisation of problems has an important effect on whether learning impacts on policy change or not. We found evidence, according to which in countries with many counter-majoritarian institutions the speed of change was slow. However, this was not necessarily negative for the impact of learning, because a long political process creates time for learning to happen and to influence on the formulation of solutions. On the other hand, in countries with less institutional veto points, reforms pass faster, but learning occurs only after decision making – during the implementation process.



## Annex

The following table presents the case studies of countries and innovations that were conducted in the course of the country reports that are part of WP5. For each country, I am presenting the innovations that we analyzed as well as some findings that are common to all of the analyzed innovations regarding policy learning, if the authors underlined this.

*Table 1: Overview of policy learning in selected labor market and social policy innovations*

Country	Policy fields and instruments	Feedback-mechanism & origin of solution	Problem pressure & Salience	Politicization (Interest groups, parties)
<b>BE</b>	<b><i>InnBE1</i></b> : Increasing retirement age for the elderly and keep a larger share of them employed: Generation pact in 2005 was the main reform, which entailed later retirement age, re-entry incentives, compensation for employers, pension bonus for those continuing to work (Struyven and Pollet 2015: 10). The revision of the reform in 2012 reformed the pension age even further (66 by 2025 and 67 by 2030) plus stricter regulations for early retirement (Struyven and Pollet 2015: 13).	EU feedback: Country specific recommendations demanded an increase of the employment rate of the elderly. What is more, the EU Strategy 2020 set a target for employment rate of the elderly. These incentives had an impact on BE. Di Rupo government installed a Commission for Pension Reform (Struyven and Pollet 2015: 11). Domestic learning through the pension reform commission (Struyven and Pollet 2015: 35).	Highly salient issue, since distributive elements are involved??	Pressure by the E. Commission due to reports; federal government and coalition parties are also important (Struyven and Pollet 2015: 12); politicized, but the government succeeded to push it through in 2014; Generation pact is still very contested politically (Struyven and Pollet 2015: 26).  Conservatives demanded budgetary discipline (Struyven and Pollet 2015: 36). Political learning: Centre-right government pushed the reform through (2014) without broad consultation in order to avoid too

				much politicization of the matter (Struyven and Pollet 2015: 36).
	<p><b>InnBE2:</b> New job monitoring scheme in 2004: Links the receipt of unemployment benefits to active efforts to find a job. Non-compliance is sanctioned; 2012 the scheme was extended to younger and older unemployed; 2014 the Michel government has planned to extend these practices to target groups of collective layoffs (Struyven and Pollet 2015: 10).</p>	<p>Flemish region used its newly gained autonomy to establish this instrument. The decision was based on projections of the Flemish employment service (Struyven and Pollet 2015: 16); However activating the 50+ did not work so well (Struyven and Pollet 2015: 17). Learning through the experience of the Flemish region (Struyven and Pollet 2015: 37).</p>		
	<p><b>InnBE3:</b> Youth Employment Plan: Goal was to increase employment of young; established by a decree in 2009 for the entire Flemish region (Struyven and Pollet 2015: 20).</p>	<p>The idea emerged from the EU 1998 Employment Guidelines (Struyven and Pollet 2015: 19). As of 2005 a number of experiments were conducted, organized by the government and NGOs to increase employment; successfully evaluated and then became a law</p>		Not politicized; receives support from all political parties (Struyven and Pollet 2015: 26).

		(Struyven and Pollet 2015: 19-20, 39).		
	<b>Common:</b>	EU recommendations and OECD reports are important for all policy makers (Struyven and Pollet 2015: 27). Regions seem to learn from another. The Flemish PES (Public Employment Service) has successfully completed some projects and the Wallonian government is learning (Struyven and Pollet 2015: 27-28). Recent devolution		Change of government only in 2014 (Struyven and Pollet 2015: 25).
<b>CH</b>	<b>InnCH1:</b> New management-by-objectives and control system of cantonal disability offices. This reform passed the national parliament in 2004. It reforms the oversight of the federal government over the cantonal offices. What is more, it created regional medical services to standardize the	The federal government proposed this solution, namely to tighten control of cantonal practices by having more discretion regarding the cantonal offices and by establishing state medical competences in the regional medical services. Another option would have been to raise taxes, but such a reform	The reform responded to the problem of too high debts in the invalidity insurance. These are mostly debts with the national pension insurance (Bonoli et al. 2015: 8). The problem is that the cantonal offices are in charge of deciding on benefit claims, but they report to the cantonal government and not	Cantons vs. federal government. Originally, the national government had proposed that the regional medical services are under its supervision. The cantons lobbied successfully against this strategy in the national parliament, which eventually confined the set-up of the regional medical services. Similarly, the

	<p>evaluation of benefit claims in the invalidity insurance (Bonoli et al. 2015: 5-6).</p>	<p>proposal failed in a popular referendum, in 1999 (Bonoli et al. 2015: 7-10).</p>	<p>the federal government. What is more, the cantonal offices lack medical competences and depend on the assessment of external doctors or the GP of the benefit claimant (Bonoli et al. 2015: 6).</p>	<p>parliament granted the federal office of social insurances less discretion vis-à-vis the cantonal offices than proposed by the national government (Bonoli et al. 2015: 31-32).</p>
	<p><b>InnCH2:</b> New set of early intervention instruments for new disability benefit claimants. Specifically, the reform created new instruments to prevent individuals with disabilities from becoming dependent on pensions early on. This reform entailed a change in the order of the instruments used in the invalidity insurance by putting prevention before pensions (Bonoli et al. 2015: 12-14).</p>	<p>The solution was suggested by the national government. Eventually, the law made it easier for private organizations to propose pilots for measures aiming at preventing individuals from getting too quickly pensions and instead trying to reinsert them into the labor market (Bonoli et al. 2015: 14-15).</p>	<p>Essentially, the measure tried to respond to a similar problem than the previous innovation: reducing the debt of the invalidity insurance (Bonoli et al. 2015: 6).</p>	<p>This innovation was highly politicized and is part of a compromise. One-sided solutions to reduce debt in the invalidity insurance either by tax raises or cuts in benefits had no majority. Consequently, political parties struggled to find a compromise that allowed to reduce costs and at the same time ensured simple cuts in benefits for beneficiaries (Bonoli et al. 2015: 32-33).</p>
	<p><b>InnCH3:</b> This innovation is a new law that reforms vocational training in Switzerland (Vocational and Professional Training and</p>	<p>Parliament had already demanded to reform the existing educational training system, but it was only in 2004 that the Federal Council proposed a new law</p>	<p>Problem was that the old system did not respond anymore to the demands to the apprenticeship market (Bonoli et al. 2015: 17-18). Many</p>	<p>--</p>



	<p>Education Act, 2002). The law regrouped all training programs under the oversight of the federal government. What is more, it created a unified upper-secondary system of education, which had not been the case before, because cantons had many fragmented solutions (Bonoli et al. 2015: 18).</p>	<p>for consultation. The draft had been set up by an expert commission (Bonoli et al. 2015: 18). Positive evaluation of the case management in 2007 (Bonoli et al. 2015: 48-49).</p>	<p>youngsters could not find places for an apprenticeship anymore (Bonoli et al. 2015: 47).</p>	
	<b>Common:</b>			
<b>GER</b>	<p><b>InnGER1:</b> Statutory Minimum Wage (2015); History of sector wide minimum wages in Germany, which also applied to foreign workers (Posting of Workers Act, first application in 1996). After 2007, other sectors followed and were included under the Act (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 12).</p>	<p>Unions started to put the program on the national political agenda in 2002; the proposal was supported by independent research institutes, i.e. the German Institute for Economic Research or the Institute for Employment Research (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 48).</p> <p>Problem was the decline of collective agreements in many sectors and an increasing wage</p>		<p>Opposition of the reform came especially from the employer's organizations, but also the unions were not immediately in favor of this ideas, because they were afraid to lose bargaining autonomy (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 8, 11-12, 19).</p> <p>Especially, business opposition was strong. Their opposition was successful after the election of 2005. However, in 2013,</p>

		<p>disparity between East and West Germany (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 9-10).</p> <p>The application of the minimum wage in many sectors served as a quasi-experiment.</p> <p>In 2009, the existing sectorial minimum wages were evaluated in eight sectors and no negative effect could be found for employment (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 12).</p> <p>Apart from that there were several fact finding missions to the UK by parliamentarians from both big parties and trade union representatives to learn about the effect of the minimum wage (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 18,49).</p> <p>Favorable economic situation in 2015 makes it easier to</p>		<p>all the other parties, except for the business wing of the CDU were convinced that a general minimum wage was necessary (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 12, 19).</p> <p>Yet, the decisive event for introducing the minimum wage was the failure to reach a collective agreement for the hospitality and retail sector; then the CDU decided to agree to the wage (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 20).</p>
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		introduce a minimum wage (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 49).		
	<p><b><i>InnGER2:</i></b> Reduction of early retirement age; this innovation covers a number of reforms from the early 1990s until 2009, when national governments in Germany continuously increased retirement age (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 30); These innovations occurred: Stage 1: 1992, entering into force 2001, but was advanced in 1997: Gradual increase of respective retirement ages for particular groups Stage 2: Acceleration of the process of phasing-out the options for early retirement (1996), Raising upper-threshold for the early pension for severely disabled (1999), Raising threshold for the early pension for unemployed &amp; Abolition of early</p>	<p>Most important for this reform were cost pressure, which were even aggravated by the Maastricht treaty and the deficit ceilings; what is more, the weak economic situation and Germany reunification put additional pressure on the German pension system (GER-Rep, 34-38, 36).</p> <p>Role of commissions increased and those of social partners decreased (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 37).</p> <p>Creation of a new early retirement scheme in 2005 was very close to the suggestions of the independent Herzog-Commission (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 39).</p>		<p>Usually, the scientific literature regards the reform of 1992 as the result of a consensus not only of the conservative party, but also the trade unions and the Social Democratic Party in the national parliament. CDU and employers had already been in favor of more liberalization during the 1980s (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 34). Social democrats and unions were opposed as they were afraid of raising unemployment rates, but the projections of an ageing population and the cost thereof for the retirement system (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 35)</p> <p>Increasing politicization of the pension politics after 1999, when the CDU</p>

	<p>retirement for part time unemployed (2004); Standard retirement with 67 (2007); New early retirement scheme for those contributing 45 years and more (2007/2013) (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 31)</p>	<p>Learning in this reform occurred in three ways:</p> <p>a). Expert network (pension experts from social partners, ministries and political parties), which informally prepared the reforms in 1992 &amp; 1999 based on the statistical information -&gt; depoliticized and de-parliamentarized political process. After the politicization of the reform process, expert commission replaced the informal network; many of their suggestions were implemented -&gt; electoral suicide for the Social Democrats (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 40-41).</p> <p>No direct EU influence, but Maastricht is important.</p>		<p>as well as the SPD both created their own expert commissions to propose suggestions for how to stabilize the system (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 38).</p> <p>Despite politicization some suggestions of the independent Rürup-commission passed parliament in 2004, but the standard retirement age was not raised, because it was deemed too dangerous politically.</p> <p>The interest of the Social Democrats for the renewal of the early retirement age becomes also apparent in the launching of some projects to find options for re-introducing early retirement. Eventually, none of these options could be retained (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 34).</p>
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				Overall broad consensus that the reform is necessary; the incremental changes from 1992-2007 occurred in a way that no severe cuts needed to be made. Even when the issue became more politicized, there was no overall rupture of the political consensus (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 50).
	<p><b><i>InnGER3:</i></b>          Perspective 50'plus - a national program for older jobseekers: Launched by the Federal Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs in mid2005, six month after the implementation of Hartz IV. The program phased out in 2015: Job-centers could apply for funding to get support jobseekers 50plus; German money only (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 43).</p>	<p>The German “culture of early retirement” had incentivized many elderly jobseekers to use unemployment benefits to create pathways into retirement. Hartz IV made this strategy considerably more complicated. Therefore, this program was set-up (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 44).</p> <p>Positive evaluation of the program in terms of re-integration of recipients in the labor market, but not many of them</p>		<p>Program was launched by the Federal Ministry for Employment and Social Affairs without adding further legislation (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 43).</p>

		<p>managed to make a living due to low salaries.</p> <p>Government documents referred to the Stockholm targets (2001: 50% employment rate of elderly by 2010), but there was no explicit learning and transfer of ideas like the British New Deal 50+ (2000 to 2009) or the Finnish National Program on Ageing Workers (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 46).</p> <p>The successful implementation of 50+ lead to subsequent programs in Germany (Jansen and Knuth 2015: 46-47).</p>		
	<b>Common:</b>			
<b>GRE</b>	<p><b>InnGR1:</b></p> <p>Temporal employment for public benefit 2011: Five to seven months temporary employment for public benefit (i.e. cleaning of municipalities);</p>	<p>Idea originated domestically by the Greek government and was financed by the ESF (European Social fund) (Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 10).</p> <p>Problem in the implementation,</p>		<p>Politicized policy process. Opposition parties were against the measure and demanded more, to establish more sustainable measures (Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 10).</p>

	<p>around 500Euro wage plus social insurance contributions (Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 10). Had already been applied during the 1990s in regions with very high unemployment, but for a period for 12-24 months (Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 39).</p>	<p>recipients felt like beneficiaries rather than employees -&gt; basically no one could find a permanent job after the program (Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 11-12). Following some of the OMCs, these some temporary works programs had been created in the form of internships (Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 26-28). After the onset of the crisis, the issue was discussed with Greek experts who worked on this issue abroad; Syriza took it up in 2015 (Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 40).</p>		<p>Public work politicized issue by Syriza.</p>
	<p><b>InnGR2:</b> Voucher Scheme to finance temporary training of unemployed in private companies, created 2011. The voucher financed training and employment of the recipient (Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 12-13).</p>	<p>The OECD had suggested such a program already earlier on (2005), but the introduction in Greece failed. Only in 2011, when the crisis pressure had augmented considerably, the program was implemented. Funds came from the ESF (European Social</p>		<p>The committee (Scientific Committee of the National Council of Association of Vocational Training to Employment) that proposed the reform to the Ministry of employment was divided. Some members opposed the suggestions, arguing that it would</p>

		<p>Fund) 2011 (Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 12). These vouchers had been part of the recommendations of the EU, namely the EES 2011 (Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 13-14).</p> <p>During the crisis, unemployment amongst Greek youth had reached more than 60 percent, only then the government reacted 2011 (Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 13-14). Measures were based on the secured EU-funds (Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 14). Problem: Program did not allow for many young people to reenter the labor market for a longer time period; most dropped out after the program had finished (Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 15). Ideas were transferred from the experience in other</p>		<p>put too much of a focus on individual responsibility and weaken the state's duties to care for the unemployed (Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 41).</p>
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		<p>countries, but not adapted to the Greek labor market (Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 21).</p> <p>Discussed the first time during the crisis; idea came from a guy who were a former officer in Brussels (Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 41).</p> <p>The then Pasok government adopted the program following the recommendations of the World Bank and the IMF (Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 42).</p>		
	<p><b><i>InnGR3:</i></b> Stricter rules for obtaining a full pension since 2015. Notably, the overall level of pensions will be calculated according to the sum of all years, not only the best five years (Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 17).</p>	<p>External pressure</p> <p>Frist attempts to reform the Greek pension system had been made in 1997 by a former IMF chairman who predicted the collapse of the Greek pension system by 2005; In the same vein, UK actuaries recommended to significantly, reform the pension system</p>	<p>Highly salient issue during the crisis, of course</p>	<p>Greek pension reforms had been postponed since the mid-1990s. It had been very clear that the demand for financing would explore, but a consensus on a real reform could not be found (Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 17). Unions and other actors challenge reforms in court, often</p>

		<p>(Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 37).</p> <p>Reform returned to the table under the pressure of the Troika</p>		<p>successfully, because they were excluded from the parliamentary decision-making process (Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 21).</p> <p>Pasok and the labor unions opposed the reform in the late 1990s, presenting other calculations and evidence (Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 37).</p>
	<b>Common:</b>	<p>Troika and the memorandums affect agenda-setting of issues (Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 17).</p>		<p>Lack of consultation before reforms already prior to the crisis; even less regarding the implementation of the troika demanded anti-crisis policies; often (Papadopoulou et al. 2015: 21).</p>
<b>HU</b>	<p><b>InnHU1:</b> First program created in 2005, others followed 2007 and 2012, extending the benefits to other vulnerable groups. The START cards (START, START PLUS, START EXTRA, START BONUS and START REGION) are essentially a wage subsidy, which</p>	<p>There was one prior program, which the World Bank had funded in the 1990s (Lengyel et al. 2015: 26).</p> <p>In the 2007, employment rate of the population overall and especially the young was particularly low</p>		<p>Initiated by the national government (HU-Rep, 26).</p>

	<p>grants tax reliefs for wages up to a certain extent (Lengyel et al. 2015: 21-22).</p>	<p>(Lengyel et al. 2015: 26, 44).</p> <p>As of 2008, the public employment rate exploded</p> <p>Program was funded by the EU (Lengyel et al. 2015: 49).</p> <p>The programs worked well and the targets could be overachieved (Lengyel et al. 2015: 24).</p> <p>Program was funded by the EU, therefore the ideas were implemented (Lengyel et al. 2015: 26).</p> <p>The authors estimate that without the program, unemployment in Hungary would be considerably more high</p>		
	<p><b>InnHU2:</b> The pathway to work scheme; started in January 2009; those who can work amongst the unemployed are put into a general work scheme and need to do public work;</p>	<p>Similar programs were already run before since the late 1980s and had been re-used during the 1990s. However, it was only during the crisis of 2009, that the number of recipients in the</p>		<p>In principle, governments supported the issue, but the bureaucracy resisted these programs, especially the creation of the pathway to work scheme (Lengyel et al. 2015: 70).</p>

	<p>needs-based and recipients need to cooperate (Lengyel et al. 2015: 68).</p> <p>Alignment with unemployment assistance in 2011 (Lengyel et al. 2015: 70).</p> <p>Fine-tuning of schemes in 2013 (Lengyel et al. 2015: 70).</p>	<p>program exceeded tremendously (Lengyel et al. 2015: 69).</p> <p>Evidence is being ignored (Lengyel et al. 2015: 72).</p>		<p>Programs are being implemented despite evidence that these programs do not yield good results (Lengyel et al. 2015: 72), however they are useful to attract electoral support.</p>
	<p><b>InnHU3:</b> New Labor Code 2011; The reform entails a significant flexibilisation of the labor market;</p> <p>The new reform put considerable impetus on free regulations between unions and employers, which would weaken the unions even further (Lengyel et al. 2015: 74).</p>	<p>Not based on any experiments or other attempts, but the program was just implemented as such, after consulting legal questions (Lengyel et al. 2015: 74).</p>		<p>A prior reform in 2004 that was proposed by the liberal-left government failed due to the resistance of the Unions (Lengyel et al. 2015: 73).</p> <p>The Orban government had excluded the unions from consultation and they only were heard after the EU and the ILO had put pressure on the Hungarian government (Lengyel et al. 2015: 74).</p>
	<b>Common:</b>			
<b>IT</b>	<b>InnIT1:</b> Apprenticeship for	Main problem of the first reforms in the		Apprenticeship has a bad reputation in

	<p>young workers; three adaptations: 2003, 2011, 2013 (Sergi et al. 2015: 51).</p> <p>After the onset of the crisis, youth unemployment increased steadily; consolidation act of 2011 did also affect the youth apprentice system (Sergi et al. 2015: 51-55). What is more, the 2011 reform should improve the network of social partners and regions (Sergi et al. 2015: 14).</p> <p>2013 reform under Letta and the 2014 decree under Renzi focused on simplifying contracts for apprentices, tax reliefs for employers and reduced training organizations. These reforms withdrew from the concept of the apprenticeship (Sergi et al. 2015: 15).</p>	<p>1990s was the unemployment rate amongst young people and a lack of transition to the labor market. What is more, as of the early 2000s, the Italian government wanted to react to the targets set by the Lisbon (2000) and Stockholm (2001) targets and tried to learn from other countries (Lengyel et al. 2015: 51-52).</p> <p>2003 reform followed the French model of tertiary higher education apprenticeship was copied , and evaluations were made (Sergi et al. 2015: 52).</p> <p>In the crisis, the Italian government turned to Germany and began to promote national apprenticeship contracts under the Monti-Government. German dual model was regarded as successful (Sergi et al. 2015: 52). In</p>		<p>Italy, contrary to Austria and Germany (Sergi et al. 2015: 51-55).</p> <p>2011 reform of the apprenticeship occurred in the context of austerity, which interrupted earlier reforms (2003) (Sergi et al. 2015: 19).</p> <p>During the Monti government, the results of the fact finding mission to Germany should be implemented, but the process was stopped after the changes from the Monti to the Letta and then the Renzi government. Especially the latter change ended the reform process (Sergi et al. 2015: 53-54).</p>
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		<p>2012, dual apprenticeship program with Germany, which allowed Italian youngsters to find apprenticeships in Germany (Sergi et al. 2015: 53).</p> <p>Furthermore fact-findings missions to Germany, which found that Italy lacked especially a national certification system and a coordination of the regions and municipalities (Sergi et al. 2015: 53).</p>		
	<p><b>InnIT2:</b> Reform of unemployment benefits; In the years 2000-2012 the benefits for unemployed were extended continuously, in Italy. Consequently, the main focus of LMPs was on passive elements (Sergi et al. 2015: 33-34).</p> <p>After the 2009, the benefits were increased, but some elements of conditionality and ALMPs were added,</p>	<p>After 2011, the external pressure on Italy increased considerably, since the Troika demanded consolidation policies (Sergi et al. 2015: 34-35).</p> <p>In 2009, when the first regional governments wanted to use ESF money, the policies had to shift towards more ALMPs. Since the demand for financing increased in 2012, the national</p>		<p>Coordination of municipalities and regions is lacking, which was a problem in the implementation of others' best practices and effectively hampered learning (Sergi et al. 2015: 56).</p> <p>Learning from Germany occurred to some extent, but the social partners vetoed the modification of short-term work and a reform of social</p>

	<p>in the beginning this was however mostly experimentally (Sergi et al. 2015: 34).</p> <p>For example the 2012 reform extended eligibility to more groups, but eligibility control became much tighter (Sergi et al. 2015: 35)</p>	<p>government demanded negotiations with the ESF (Sergi et al. 2015: 36).</p> <p>Usually, policymaking in Italy driven by problem pressure rather than policy learning. Different in 2009, since there was a need for creative solutions, as the report argues; Since ALMPs were necessary to get the ESF money, regional offices were allowed to “experiment” -&gt; but not many did in the end (Sergi et al. 2015: 55-56).</p> <p>Learning from the Hartz-reform in Germany to adapt the second pillar of unemployment protection (Sergi et al. 2015: 56).</p>		<p>assistance schemes were not put into the reform package.</p>
	<p><b>InnIT3:</b> Reform of the public employment services; In Italy, placement services had been in public hands and was gradually privatized</p>	<p>ESF money started the implementation of ALMPs in Italy (Sergi et al. 2015: 58). Europeanization (ALMPs) and use of European money for Italian policies (cost-</p>		

	<p>during the 1990s. The reasons for this were partly EU rules (Sergi et al. 2015: 26). Main Problem: lack of coordination between regional and municipal agencies. Only in 2015, the national government created a National Agency for Active Labor Market Policies (Sergi et al. 2015: 27). Training is usually in the hands of the regions and financed by ESF money (Sergi et al. 2015: 30).</p>	<p>shifting) (Sergi et al. 2015: 58).</p> <p>OECD has criticized that Italian PES are ill equipped for systematic training; in Germany public agencies are much better staffed than in Italy for example (Sergi et al. 2015: 58).</p>		
	<b>Common:</b>			
<b>NL</b>	<p><b>InnNL1:</b> Participation law 2013; Integration of three existing laws: social assistance, sheltered employment act for disabled workers, benefits for unemployed who have become disabled before they turned 18. The new law tires to provide services to these people and reintegrate them in the labor market and</p>	<p>Research reports have played an important role in putting the issue on the agenda, i.e. the deVries report (2008) (Aa et al. 2015: 9).</p> <p>2009-2012: Nationwide experiments (Aa et al. 2015: 10).</p> <p>Learning played an important role in this reform in the following ways.</p>		<p>In the decision-making process, parties and stakeholders were divided: Christian democrats and liberals as well as the municipalities supported the deVries report. The social-democrats and the unions opposed the plans, especially because they did not trust the capacities of the cities to implement</p>



	<p>support employers financially in hiring these people. What is more, municipalities will be in charge of implementation – and also financing of these measures -&gt; avenue for cost-shifting (Aa et al. 2015: 7).</p>	<p>However, the most important questions were budgetary issues. 1. The proposal was based on statistical information, which was important (Aa et al. 2015: 36). 2. Academic research reports played an important role for agenda setting (Aa et al. 2015: 37). 3. Experiments were done. However, their policy impact was rather modest, since recommendations were not very specific. However, the experiments had some impact and provided useful evidences for the implementation of the measures (Aa et al. 2015: 38). 4. Policy experts were heard in the formulation process, but their information was not considered important. 5. International learning was not so important, especially the EU channels did not play a role</p>		<p>the program (Aa et al. 2015: 10).</p> <p>The post-experiment decision-making process was heavily influenced by the anti crisis policies. New, Social Democratic government, which eventually agreed with the proposal although the party had opposed it before the crisis. The municipalities were kicked out of the process, although they had participated before. In the end, there was a compromise between the two biggest parties necessary, since the Social Democrats had no majority in the Senate. Cost-containment played a more important role than quality of services due to the crisis context. (Aa et al. 2015: 11).</p>
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		<p>contrary to US experiences. Germany and Belgium were mentioned as sources of inspiration, and Scandinavian countries as examples for decentralization (Aa et al. 2015: 37-39).</p>		
	<p><b>InnNL2:</b> Increase of retirement age from 65 to 67; the reform passed in 2015 (Aa et al. 2015: 17).</p>	<p>Pressure by the EU and the OECD to reform faster as well as the Bakker Commission that underlined again in 2008 that the demographic pressure on the pension system would increase even further.</p> <p>The 2008 crisis and the necessity to consolidate the public budget opened the window of opportunity (Aa et al. 2015: 39-40).</p>	<p>Pension reforms in the Netherlands is a highly salient issue and public opinion fiercely opposed changing the existing system that granted every citizen at least 70% of the minimum wage as of 65. In the 1994, the Christian democrats severely lost in elections when announcing to raise retirement age and in 2006, the social democrats suffered significantly in the polls after bringing the issue to the agenda (Aa et al. 2015: 39-40).</p>	<p>2008 crisis was a window of opportunity and public resistance against increasing the retirement age reduced and warning by scientist were heard. The conservative government failed to reach a consensus with the social partners. Only the Rutte I and Rutte governments succeeded to bring a bill to the parliament in 2013, which passed and increased retirement age to 67 as of 2025. In 2015 another reform was added, which linked the retirement age to average life</p>

				<p>expectancy and increased entitlement age faster (Aa et al. 2015: 17).</p> <p>Consensus between the parties that a reform is necessary; problem was public opposition and opposition by trade unions).</p>
	<p><b>InnNL3:</b> Work and Security Act, 2014: The act changes the dismissal of workers and the conditions of flex work; it broadens the access to Older Unemployment Income Scheme Act, but narrows the access to the Older and Partially Disabled Workers Unemployment Income Scheme Act (Aa et al. 2015: 20).</p>	<p>Little learning in this innovation: Rather powering than puzzling, because the project was subject to considerable negotiations (Aa et al. 2015: 40).</p> <p>Informal networks were very important. Scientific experts were consulted only informally. Due to the short time period for the project, there was no time for extensive pilot projects (Aa et al. 2015: 41).</p> <p>Use of some statistical data; the Bakker commission was mentioned as being important</p>		<p>The reform is the result of the political negotiations between political parties and the social partners (Aa et al. 2015: 21-22). Generally, there was a consensus regarding most of the contents. Only the employers preferred a less complex dismissal law (Aa et al. 2015: 23).</p> <p>The measure entailed significant budget cuts (1.2 Bill), but the context of the crisis legitimized these measures (Aa et al. 2015: 23).</p>

		<p>several times. The role of the EU, was rather minor. The Missoc database was used to compare the Dutch unemployment benefits to those of other European countries and to find out that the Dutch system was rather generous (Aa et al. 2015: 41).</p>		
	<p><b>Common:</b></p>	<p>Overall, the authors argue that there is little policy learning, mostly so in the reform of the retirement age, where there was a large consensus amongst stakeholders and parties as well as convincing evidence. More generally, politicians tend to accept the insights of scientific evidence (Aa et al. 2015: 42).</p> <p>Trial and error as well as statistical information are more important than complex experiments, since there is less cost attached to the</p>		<p>Political negotiations are important; what is more, policymakers often wait for the right moment to implement an idea (Aa et al. 2015: 42), when it fits their personal agenda.</p>

		former (Aa et al. 2015: 43).		
<b>SLO</b>	<b>InnSLO1:</b> Pension reforms in 2010 and 2013. The goal was to reduce public employment and get as many people as possible off the public sector (Josipovič and Šumi 2015: 6).	--	--	--
	<b>InnSLO2:</b> Labor Market Regulation Act; no clear information available regarding timing and sequences (Josipovič and Šumi 2015: 9-11).	--	--	--
	<b>InnSLO3:</b> Act to prevent undeclared work; there were several reforms, 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2014. The reform in 2014 exempted some forms of work from declaration, but the report is not very specific about it (Josipovič and Šumi 2015: 13).	--	--	--
	<b>Common:</b> Active			Apparently all the reforms were a reaction to the demands by the EU and the associated

				demands for fiscal coordination; report seems to be critical about this, but does not explain any further (Josipovič and Šumi 2015: 18).
<b>SP</b>	<b><i>InnSP1:</i></b> Active Insertion Income; Created as of 2000 based on temporal decrees; full establishment in 2006 (Martínez-Molina et al. 2015: 12).	Followed the suggestion of the EU, notably the European Commission. At the time (2000-2006), the goal of the policy was to include vulnerable groups in the labor market; however, this changed during the crisis. Then the instrument became a tool to include everybody, during the crisis- respectively the numbers of applications -> 2012 Reform, Tightening of conditions (Martínez-Molina et al. 2015: 13)		Not very politicized; no party differences regarding the reform (Martínez-Molina et al. 2015: 13). Yet, there was opposition of business organizations to the reform (Martínez-Molina et al. 2015: 15).
	<b><i>InnSP2:</i></b> Temporary assistance scheme for unemployment to support reinsertion in the job market. Services contained income for those who have no more claims on	The reasons for the reform were above all the economic and social pressures of the crisis (Martínez-Molina et al. 2015: 17). Evaluation and adaptation of the program in	High unemployment is a salient issue, presumably, in Spain.	Essentially, both parties supported the measure. The socialist government created though the policy and the Rajoy government did not abolish it in 2012, yet there were some

	<p>regular unemployment benefits (created 2011) (Martínez-Molina et al. 2015: 16); Reform in 2012, adaptation after the evaluation (Martínez-Molina et al. 2015: 17-18).</p>	<p>(Martínez-Molina et al. 2015: 12). Yet, prior to introducing the instrument, a pilot had failed and the policy was created according to known practices rather than experimentation (no learning), as some of the interview partners reported. Evaluations of the policy showed that only 18% of recipients found jobs for more than two months after finishing the program (Martínez-Molina et al. 2015: 49-50).</p>		<p>discussions with the unions about the program (Martínez-Molina et al. 2015: 17). The conservative government adapted the program according to the standards of the prior government (Martínez-Molina et al. 2015: 17-18).</p>
	<p><b><i>InnSP3</i></b>: Strategy of encouraging Entrepreneurship and self-employment (2013-2016); goal encourage employment and self-entrepreneurship of young people. Tax-relief for young unemployed; making self-employment compatible with unemployment benefits (Martínez-</p>	<p>Main problem pressure: large number of unemployed young people; large increase during the crisis (Martínez-Molina et al. 2015: 21). Ideas come from the EU strategies (Martínez-Molina et al. 2015: 21); Strong EU influence, i.e. the following instruments: The Strategy 2020, EU</p>	<p>Very salient issue</p>	<p>Policy was formulated and passed by the conservative party; no significant opposition by other parties -&gt; needs to be seen after a possible change in government (Martínez-Molina et al. 2015: 22).</p>

	Molina et al. 2015: 20).	Youth Strategy 2010-2018, European Youth Guarantee Initiative and the Flagship initiative Youth on the Move and Opportunities for Youth Initiative (Martínez-Molina et al. 2015: 43); Policy based on quantitative evaluations by national and European statistics; civil servants complain that their experience is not taken into consideration and Germany should be taken as a model. At the same time the report says that interview partners underlined that learning from others is difficult, due to unique national characteristics (Martínez-Molina et al. 2015: 44).		
	<b>Common:</b>			
<b>SWE</b>	<b>InnSWE1:</b> Complete reform of the Swedish secondary education system, including new curriculum,	The media presented the experiences in other countries, for example in Switzerland and Germany, as well as		The right wing party had made the issue part of its electoral campaign in 2006 (WHY??) and set up a committee to



	<p>education goals and grading scales. One prominent and important element was the idea to strengthen the apprenticeship program and create tighter connections between firms and the school system; the bill passed parliament in 2008 and the reform was introduced in 2011 (Minas and Andersson 2015: 26-27).</p>	<p>Denmark. The solution they suggested entailed better coordination between employers and the state to have apprenticeship programs that correspond with the demands of the labor market (Minas and Andersson 2015: 48-49).</p> <p>Apprenticeships programs were introduced as trials in 2008. There had been attempts before to strengthen education on the private market, but there problems, such as the financial compensation for employers for example (Minas and Andersson 2015: 49-50).</p>		<p>propose a new structure for secondary education in 2007; the political process comprised of an inclusion of target groups in policy formulation (trade organizations, social partners, school unions and student organizations) as well as a public hearing of the legislative draft. The apprenticeship program was most debated, especially the delegation of training competences to firms. The bureaucracy opposed these reforms, but the government insisted and the apprenticeship was set up (SWE-Rep, 27-28). (Minas and Andersson 2015: 27-28).</p> <p>A problem regarding policy implementation of these program was that there was only a small number of</p>
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				students who were really interested in these programs (Minas and Andersson 2015: 30).
	<p><b>InnSWE2:</b> Activity compensation for disabled youth; cash benefits; introduced 2003; the reform shifted the eligibility from 19-30 years; revised in 2007; conditionality: the benefits were related to some paid work and assessment conditions became stricter (Minas and Andersson 2015: 33-34).</p>	<p>Key problems pressure for the 2007 reform: increasing applications for the benefit, but no increase in placement on the labor market (Minas and Andersson 2015: 38).</p> <p>As of 2008, monitoring was established for the program a number of reports were published. In 2011, an evaluation showed that since 1995, application doubled, but the placement towards regular employment remained as low as ever (Minas and Andersson 2015: 51).</p> <p>As of 2008, trials with private actors to assess their placement rates compared to public</p>		<p>The left government introduced the 2003 program; in 2007 the right-wing government reformed the program (Minas and Andersson 2015: 34).</p> <p>The 2007 reform was subject to a public consultation, as any legislative reform proposal. Overall, the reform received a lot of support, as it aimed at activating disabled youth better for the labor market; the only conflict point was regarding the role of the public agency (SIA) in the implementation process (Minas and Andersson 2015: 35).</p> <p>Differences between municipalities in the implementation due</p>

		<p>actors, however private providers did not come up with better results (Minas and Andersson 2015: 51-52).</p> <p>Another pilot assessed better instruments for returning to work and improving work capability. After assessment, the program became a national policy (Minas and Andersson 2015: 52).</p> <p>What is more, the SIA used some methods that were developed abroad, i.e. in the U.S. to improve the implementation of Activity compensation. Municipalities and regions can apply for these funds to improve their implementation of these policies (Minas and Andersson 2015: 51-52).</p>		<p>to different financial constraints (Minas and Andersson 2015: 37).</p>
	<p><b><i>InnSWE3</i></b>: Job guarantee for youth; Placement and</p>	<p>Main problem was rising youth unemployment</p>		<p>National government right wing government</p>

	<p>training program for youth; 2006; Main novelty: mandatory participation to keep remuneration; implemented by the national agency (Minas and Andersson 2015: 39).</p>	<p>2001-2006 (Minas and Andersson 2015: 39).</p> <p>Ideas came from similar experiences in Denmark and GB (Minas and Andersson 2015: 40).</p> <p>Evaluations of the program show that the programs are in practice not full time programs (Minas and Andersson 2015: 42).</p> <p>Development of the program based on research by the right-wing party's researchers. But the memorandum for the reform refers to a government report that outlines several factors to improve youth employment (Minas and Andersson 2015: 53).</p>		<p>passed the reform, but the issue had been on the agenda before. In the consultation process, the most contested point were the sanctions participants faced in case they did not comply with the program's obligation (Minas and Andersson 2015: 40). Especially the Unions fiercely opposed this point (McEnhill et al. 2015) (Minas and Andersson 2015: 40-41).</p>
	<b>Common:</b>			
<b>UK</b>	<p><b>InnUK1:</b> Employment and support allowance (ESA); aims at disabled or people with long-term</p>	<p>Yearly evaluations (negative); program not regarded as very efficient and having a high placement rate compared to</p>	<p>Problem pressure: low performance; salience?</p>	<p>Interest groups and representatives had lobbied for the 2007 change of the definition of</p>

	<p>health conditions; Introduced in the Welfare and Reform Act in 2007 (McEnhill et al. 2015: 15). Tougher sanctions in 2012 (McEnhill et al. 2015: 15).</p>	<p>other programs (no wonder given that focused on handicapped) (McEnhill et al. 2015: 16-17). 2007 changed the definition of disability (McEnhill et al. 2015: 67). Negative reports about performance, but no adaptation of the program 2007 changed the definition of disability (McEnhill et al. 2015: 68).</p>		<p>disability (McEnhill et al. 2015: 67).</p>
	<p><b>InnUK2:</b> The work program; replaced Pathways to Work in 2011, but is essentially the same, because it responded to the Freud-Report of 2007, which evaluated the old program, but the government claimed it to be all new (McEnhill et al. 2015: 27). 2011 increase of sanctions (McEnhill et al. 2015: 33).</p>	<p>Reports show that sanctions have positive effects on saving, but negative effects on job-finding. Work program performed poorly in the beginning; starter without pilot nationwide (McEnhill et al. 2015: 33).</p>	<p>Saliency: UK electorate supportive of higher sanctions towards unemployment benefit receivers (McEnhill et al. 2015: 32).</p>	<p>Conservatives favor higher sanctions, however, the topic had not been part of the New Labor Program prior to 2010 (McEnhill et al. 2015: 33).</p>
	<p><b>InnUK3:</b> National Minimum Wage; introduced 1998 by Labor after</p>	<p>1992-1997, the perception of minimum wage changed, due to</p>	<p>Salient; labor won the election with this topic in 1997; when it promised to</p>	<p>Politicized in 1997, conservative government did not support the idea,</p>

	<p>promised in the election; entered the political agenda during the 1980s; both main parties were opposed to it in the 1980s and early 1990s as they were afraid of negative effects on the economy (McEnhill et al. 2015: 32-33). Freeze of minimum wage for the young, in 2012 (McEnhill et al. 2015: 32).</p>	<p>positive evaluations of the American minimum wage (McEnhill et al. 2015: 34). No UK evidence (McEnhill et al. 2015: 35). Later evaluations of the UK program did not find any negative effect of the law on employment practices (McEnhill et al. 2015: 36). No positive effect expected concerning the freeze for young people should have on their employment (McEnhill et al. 2015: 39)</p>	<p>introduce a commission to deal with the issue rather than promising an actual rater of minimum wage (McEnhill et al. 2015: 34). Conservative government supported freeze for youth MW, in 2012. Not clear on which evidence (McEnhill et al. 2015: 38).</p>	<p>although business did so. This was one of the reasons why labor lost the election (McEnhill et al. 2015: 74).</p>
	<p><b><i>Common elements</i></b></p>	<p>Central government as initiator; independent think tanks play a role in deploying policy (McEnhill et al. 2015: 40); LPC (Commission for Minimum Wage) is an important element of policy learning (McEnhill et al. 2015: 75).</p>		<p>Public opinion is against the significant spending for unemployment insurance etc. Individual is responsible for finding a job. Consequently, there all three main parties have tended to support more restrictive unemployment policies (McEnhill et al. 2015: 48).</p>



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