

Gyarmati, Andrea: Changing values and measures in population-policy, social policy and child protection in the Hungarian system of family provisions from 1989 to 2008

The paper documents the changing objectives of Hungarian family policy as well as measures taken in the past 20 years. The aim of the paper is to identify the impact of declared objectives as opposed to economic constraints on shaping policies, and to assess the coherence and success of policy measures.

Until recently, the high share of cash benefits has received little attention in policy making and research, and politicians are only beginning to recognise the importance of such benefits for employment policy. The main aim of family provisions has traditionally been to increase fertility, but the priority given to this aim has been significantly reduced by budgetary constraints – since the only fertility incentive known by politicians is the increase of cash benefits. Conservative and leftist governments have tended to use different rhetorics to support their family policies, but the measures they implemented did not always differ very much, which is partly due to obligations imposed by the European Union.

The author uses media reports, government programme documents, parliamentary debates and secondary sources to identify declared objectives and relies on secondary sources and statistics to describe policy measures and impacts.