



FAFCE

FÉDÉRATION DES ASSOCIATIONS
FAMILIALES CATHOLIQUES EN EUROPE

FÖDERATION DER KATHOLISCHEN
FAMILIENVERBÄNDE IN EUROPA

FÉDÉRATION OF CATHOLIC FAMILY
ASSOCIATIONS IN EUROPE



EVENT REPORT
Policy Briefing
Family and finance: a possible alliance?

Room JDE 52
European Economic and Social Committee
Rue Belliard 99, 1040 Brussels
Tuesday, 16 October 2018, 10:00 – 13:00



10.00 - 10.30

Opening address:

Luca Jahier, EESC President

10.30 - 11.00

Keynote speech:

Paul Dembinski, University of Fribourg, Switzerland

11.00 - 11.30

Coffee break

11.30 - 12.30

Round Table:

Kinga Joó (EESC Member, SOC Group, Hungary) Matteo Rizzolli (*LUMSA University*),
Sebastian Fitzek (*Romanian Academy*), Christos Tsironis (*University of Thessaloniki*),
Moderator: Vincenzo Bassi (*Forum delle Famiglie*)

12.30 - 13.00

Final Remarks:

Johannes de Jong, Sallux Director
Antoine Renard, FAFCE President

Language: English and French

*There have been ample debates over the reasons that have led to the Great Recession of 2008. The organizers believe that not enough emphasis has been put on the larger picture in that the system no longer values the person and hence the crisis drags on to the present day. Taking into consideration what Pope Francis has emphasized in his encyclical letter *Laudato Si*: "We urgently need a humanism capable of bringing together the different fields of knowledge, including economics, in the service of a more integral and integrating vision" the organizers set out to add their contributions to that end by proposing policy changes aimed at showing and measuring, to the extent possible, the contributions that families make to finances and to the wider society as a whole.*

Opening address:

Luca Jahier, EESC President

Journalist, political analyst, expert in the field of associations and social advancement, **Luca Jahier** has been a member of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) since 2002.



Within the EESC, he has worked extensively on the European Union's social and cohesion policies, as well as on international matters. Luca Jahier has been elected President of the EESC on 18 April 2018 for a period of two and a half years, until October 2020.

Luca Jahier, in his opening speech, stated that, *"by investing in human capital, the family is an irreplaceable form of social asset and should receive recognition for the way it cares for its members. The family should be properly supported in its social*

and economic role". He strongly supported the joint work of FAFCE and SALLUX in promoting the family and in supporting fact-based research on the positive and irreplaceable contribution of the family to the whole society.

Keynote speech:

Paul Dembinski, University of Fribourg, Switzerland



Born in Cracow in 1955, **Paul H. Dembinski**, Ph.D., studied political science in Geneva and received his doctorate in economics in 1982. In 1991 he was appointed visiting professor at Switzerland's University of Fribourg, where he now occupies the chair of International Strategy and Competition on a half-time basis. In 1989 he and his associate Alain Schoenenberger founded Eco'Diagnostic, a fully independent, interdisciplinary economic research institute that still operates today. An expert on behalf of international organizations such as OECD and UNCTAD, he also conducts studies of Switzerland's economic fabric (at both cantonal and

federal level). Since 1999 he has been co-editor of the journal *Finance & the Common Good/Bien Commun*.

Prof. Dembinski highlighted that *"Despite modelling, we know that in real life, families, not individuals are the ultimate decisions makers in serious economic matters. This shows convincingly that economic models are built on non-realistic premises. In consequence, any policy that is derived from this purely individualistic framework has to be very carefully assessed in its implications for "real" families"*. After a deep introduction, he shortly presented the document on *"Stronger Families for flourishing societies"*, that clarifies how *"Families are not only producers of capital – human capital – but also of goods and services, providers of care, and regenerators of energies essential for any productive activity"*.

Round Table:

Kinga Joó (EESC Member, SOC Group, Hungary) Matteo Rizzolli (*LUMSA University*), Sebastian Fitzek (*Romanian Academy*), Christos Tsironis (*University of Thessaloniki*), Moderator: Vincenzo Bassi (*Forum delle Famiglie*)



Vice-president of the Hungarian National Association of Large Families (NOE), **Kinga Joó** is a Member of the EESC since 2014, where she seats in Group III (Diversity Europe). She introduced the Round Table, highlighting the uniqueness of this kind of events in the European institutions and congratulating with the organizers for taking this initiative. Mrs Joo gave her professional experience from the ground, bringing the Hungarian perspective on the centrality given to family policies and referred the previous work done by the EESC and to a couple of documents

already quoted by President Jahier in his opening speech, underlining the importance to focus again on the need of family-friendly policies within the European Union. She namely referred to two EESC Opinions related to family policies, one from 2007 on *Promoting solidarity between the generations* (Rapporteur: Jahier, Diversity Europe - GR III / Italy) and another from 2011 on *Family policy and demographic change* (Rapporteur: Buffetaut, Employers - GR I / France).

Vincenzo Bassi, Ph.D., Lawyer, Barrister at the Supreme Court, PhD in Constitutional Law and European Constitutional Law – Adjunct professor in tax law at the LUMSA University of Rome, is a member of the Bureau of the Italian Forum of Family Associations (*Forum delle Famiglie*) and, as such, delegate to the Board of FAFCE. He is the author of the essay at the basis of this project, entitled “*Familyn the proto-enterprise*”, to which President Jahier also referred at the beginning of the event. Vincenzo Bassi chaired the round table, giving the framework of the whole FAFCE/SALLUX project on Family and Economy.

Matteo Rizzolli, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Public Economy and Economic Policy at the LUMSA University of Rome, is the drafting coordinator of the document on “*Stronger Families for flourishing societies*”. He described analytically, giving concrete examples, and underlining that it is a sort of a manifesto, only the starting point of a deep research to be implemented in the upcoming months.

Sebastian Fitzek, PhD, is Senior Researcher at the Institute for Quality of Life Research, Romanian Academy, and Lecturer at the Faculty of Communication and Public Relations (FCRP) of the National University for Political Studies and Public Administration (SNSPA), Romania. He started by the current situation of the Romanian family policy and the demographic survival that this country is experiencing. Then he stressed the necessity for recognizing the role of the family, for a better resilient society: “*Intergenerational solidarity is closely interlinked to the social and financial sustainability, regarding both the public welfare systems and social services, such as personal retirement strategic investment, challenges brought by the aging of the European society*”.

Christos Tsironis, Ph.D., is a theologian and social scientist. His postgraduate and doctoral studies were focused on social theory and sociology. Part of his postgraduate studies was implemented in University of Freiburg in Germany. For more than one decade he took part in various Seminars and Long-Term Training courses of the Council of Europe and other organizations, specializing in the issues of Intercultural Communication and Human Rights, Cultural and Religious Diversity and Social Problems. He worked as social researcher in national and international research Programs and was elected lecturer in 2008 at the school of Theology (Contemporary Social Theory) in the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. He gave his contribution on the family as the basic cell of society and of economy from a sociological perspective, also brining the concrete experience of current and past family policies in Greece.

Final Remarks:

Johannes de Jong, Sallux Director
Antoine Renard, FAFCE President



Johannes de Jong, Director of the SALLUX Foundation, has been working for Sallux since its start in 2011. He has been focusing on economy and international relations with a specific attention to those who are quickly overlooked in the global economy and geopolitics.

He gave his final remarks emphasizing the urgency to speak about the family in a positive way, not to defend a model or revendicate certain rights or a certain vision linked to the past, but to transmit the beauty of an experience, which is source of generativity for the whole society. Furthermore he emphasized the need for the whole centre-right to reconsider the dominant economic model: „Families, not companies, are the heart of the economy. If we do not see that, left and right populism in Europe will only grow”.



Antoine Renard has spent his professional career in the mining and railway construction industries. He has held several management positions in SMEs and in international context. He has acquired many associative experiences in the field of youth and family, as well as in NGOs with the European Institutions. He is currently a member of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (CESE) of the French Republic. He was President of the National Confederation of Catholic Family Associations (CNAFC) from 2007 to 2014 and since 2009 he is the President of the Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe (FAFCE).

In his final remarks, he underlined the multidisciplinary approach of that event, referring to what already Prof. Rizzolli said, that this is just part of a bigger project, aiming at putting again the dignity of the family at the center of the public policies of the European Union, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity. He stated that FAFCE, as a Federation of numerous family organizations from 16 European States, is willing to go forward in this partnership with the SALLUX Foundation, partnership which is bringing already good fruits.