

SUMMARY

In the book, a theoretical basis for family policy formation is given, an experience of other countries and Lithuania in shaping family policy is summed up. The rapidly changing features of the Lithuanian family, the demographic and socioeconomic behaviour of the family in the conditions of market economy are analysed, functioning problems of families are discussed, an evaluation of the Lithuanian system for rendering assistance to families in the context of the experience accumulated through the implementation of family policy in different regimes of welfare states, and of the international documents (Recommendations of the European Population Conference, Geneva, 1993; Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 1994; Concerning Recommendation on Coherent and Integrated Family Policies, the Steering Committee on Social Policy of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1997; etc.) and of theoretical basics is given, a further development of assistance to families raising children is proposed, an attention on the importance of the issues of employment and child care which play a key role in the development of family policy is drawn.

The book makes a thorough analysis of different types of assistance to family practised in different regimes of the welfare states. In the countries of liberal welfare (Great Britain, USA, etc.) assistance to family is usually effected through market relations (market-oriented family policy); in the sociodemocratic welfare states, the main idea of family development rests on the provision of conditions for the functioning of family type based on the system of two salaries and the equality of genders (the Scandinavian model); in the conservative corporate welfare states (Germany, etc.) assis-

tance to family is realised through the principle of non-interference with the family matters and encouraging the prevalence of a patriarchal family structure and non-working women.

The book introduces the international documents of the recent years, the recommendations of the European Union included, offer the guidelines for the governments of the countries towards adopting the type of family assistance prevalent in the sociodemocratic welfare states, with an emphasis on the necessity of providing full employment for men and women, all the more so that this trend of assistance to family development ensures a low level of poverty.

On the basis of the experience of other countries, international recommendations and demands of our country, the goals, principles and actions of further assistance to families with children are proposed in the book.

The programme for the support of families with children should provide favourable opportunities for a comprehensive upbringing of children from different families, regardless of the size, composition, type, financial situation, social status of the families, establish that all the children should have equal educational opportunities and prospects for the future (to acquire education, make use of health care services, feel protected in the society, etc.). Provision of conditions for the combination of parental functions and professional occupation, is one of the prerequisites to attain this goal. Efforts of the government and the public in ensuring favourable conditions for the upbringing of children should be complemented by full responsibility of parents for the care and education of their children and by their striving to ensure an autonomous and independent functioning of the family. In realising their obli-

gations for the upbringing of children, the parents must make a conscious and responsible decision about the number and timing of childbirth in the family. In their activities to support the family, the government and all the related governmental and non-governmental institutions must take into consideration all the negative demographic changes, including the depopulation which has emerged and been progressing rapidly, and also the ageing of the population which will shortly result in the burdening of the society with elderly dependants. They have to strive not only to ensure the quality of conditions for the upbringing of children, but also to encourage the families to raise the number of children sufficient to ensure the replacement of generations and the stability of the demographic situation. However, within the framework of the family support programme, the government must take into consideration the actual capability of the country to support families and to avoid supporting the proliferation of families, which do not fulfil the function of child upbringing. With respect to the key obligations of the government and all the institutions dealing with the assurance of an integral upbringing of children, the goals of the support of families with children would be as follows: to provide equal opportunities for the children raised in all types of families; to provide favourable conditions to people for the combination of parental (father and mother) functions and occupational activities; to increase parental responsibility for children upbringing; to encourage the consolidation of the family type able to ensure the replacement of population.

Taking into consideration the fact that the international documents of the recent decade addressed at the issues of family

support put an emphasis on the reciprocal interaction of population trends, family situation and economic and social environment, the development of the economic basics for family viability has been nominated as one of the leading trends of the assistance to family, which serves as the basis for a comprehensive functioning of family, for the realisation of its functions and for the integrity of parents' and children's life. Upon the evaluation of the specific national realities where economic, social and ethnocultural conditions are primarily related to the environment of family life both inherited and acquired through the instabilities and cardinal reorganisations of the recent years, it is seen that they predetermine the key elements of the trend towards the support of families with children. First, they are expressed through the setting up of legal, organisational and economic conditions for employment and provision of housing, through the arrangement of the tax and allowance system, and through the development of the environment enhancing individual and family efforts in tackling daily problems and weakening the attitudes and behaviours of dependence inherited from the command economy systems.

The rapidly changing surroundings which put at risk family and children safety, the increasing number of homeless, neglected children who have found themselves in social isolation have been given prominence in the programme for family support and have shown an exceptional importance of the action for the protection of children.

The new circumstances in upbringing and educating children, the changing orientations towards the upbringing forms of young children, and also the international experience testifying to the im-

portance of pre-school children care institutions for family life and for children's upbringing, and the attitudes shaped in the international documents on the importance of this type of child care for the upbringing of children and for family life as well as for the integrity of parenthood in combining family and professional duties, confirm the fact that the solution of these problems in Lithuania should be provided a conceptual basis which would enable to reject eclectic, frequently, unprofessional actions in the field. Therefore, the part containing the problem of child upbringing has been singled out as a separate chapter, in which an attempt at systematising the available knowledge and experience has been made.

Thus, in order to solve the urgent problems of families with children, the following structure of the programme for the support of families with children is proposed: economic basics of family viability (employment, housing, taxes; allowances, privileges (compensation, support in kind, etc.); protection of children; upbringing of children; family health and family planning.

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Kolektyvinėje monografijoje "Paramos šeimai politika: samprata ir patyrimas" apžvelgiami teoriniai paramos šeimai politikos pagrindai, tarptautinių dokumentų nuostatos dėl veiksmų šioje srityje, vertinamas Lietuvos ir įvairių socialinės gerovės valstybių vykdomos paramos šeimai patyrimas. Monografijoje trumpai apibūdinamos Lietuvos šeimos demografinės raidos ir gyvenimo sąlygų problemos, formuluojami paramos šeimai politikos tikslai, principai ir prioritetinės veiksmų kryptys.

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FAMILY POLICY: ESSENCE AND EXPERIENCE

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