

Work, and increased access to work for as many as possible, has become a modern mantra in welfare policies. It is the primacy of work, as the proposed key-aspect of welfare sustainability, which has created notions as work-first welfare. Since the 1980s, the issues of how to ensure that more individuals become self-supporting through wage labour has been high on the political agenda. Explanations for this development can be found in predictions of demographic shifts, in the breaking up of traditional family structures as well as an increasingly competitive global economy - all examples of processes which challenge the present distribution of social security in the different welfare regimes in Europe. It has become a main political concern to develop legal strategies that will increase the level of active labour market participation of the workforce. A European Work-First Welfare State provides a comparative account of how different welfare states and legal systems in Europe have responded to this challenge.

Eds. Sara Stendal, Thomas Erhag & Stamatia Devetzi