

Towards a welfare typology for the ESPON Space

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Abstract

The functioning of the welfare states in Europe is a central aspect when discussing the EU cohesion policy. Several attempts have been made since the pioneering study by Wilensky and Lebeaux in 1958 to classify the political organisation of welfare systems. The typology of Esping-Andersen (1990) is perhaps the most well-known.

The aim of this paper is to create a typology of the welfare states' systems in the 27 EU-members, the EES-countries Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, and the EU accession states Croatia and Iceland on basis of a comparative analysis of the *territorial and political organisation* of Social Services of General Interest (SSGI); i.e. education, labour market, care services and social transfer systems. The various ways, how SSGI – still mainly within national competence – can be supplied, financed and organized are expression of the type of a welfare system. We want to show that there exist certain comparable and therefore also distinguishable types of approaches of how to organize SSGI within the ESPON countries.

Furthermore, we will identify the regional differences in welfare systems in some, federal constituted, countries (e.g. Austria, Belgium and Germany) as well as in countries with a strong regional independence (e.g. Spain and Italy) take them into account when interpreting the classification.

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