



Social Protection Reform Project
中国-欧盟社会保障改革项目

Panel Discussion Report

**An integrated system for the coordinated management
of the social assistance system**

Ministry of Finance, P. R. China

Tuesday, August 29th, 2017
CHINA PEOPLE'S PALACE HOTEL, BEIJING
ROOM 17, 6th FLOOR, BUILDING C

INTRODUCTION

On 29th August 2017, the EU-China Social Protection Reform Project- Component 2 held a Panel Discussion on the topic “An integrated system for the coordinated management of the social assistance system” (topic 2.1.4) in cooperation with the Dibao Division of the Ministry of Finance. The morning session was dedicated to the presentation on the Chinese context and main challenges faced by the Government in optimizing the coordination of the Social Assistance system (by Prof. Jiang Zhen); and relevant EU practices from the Czech Republic (by Pavel Janeček), the UK, Sweden, The Netherlands (by Mel Cosuins) and Italy (by Renzo Turatto and Alessandro Longhi). In the afternoon session representatives of provincial government of Hebei (Wenzhou Liu), Shandong (Wei Song) and Anhui (Meimei Sun) presented the results of local experiences. Around 25 participants, including representatives from Dibao and Actuarial Divisions of the Ministry of Finance, China International Economic Exchange Center, National School of Administration, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the EU Delegation to China and Mongolia, UK Embassy and the project team took part in the Panel.

The agenda and list of participants are attached as annexes.



Mr. Wang Xiong, Director of the Dibao Division Social Security Department of MoF and Mr Bruni, EU Resident Expert of Component 2 and Team Leader, jointly chaired the meeting.

Mr. Wang Xiong opened the Panel by welcoming all the participants and introducing the Chinese experts and officials, he also expressed the greetings and welcome from Mrs. Zu Guoying, Director

General of the Social Security Department of MoF, which could not attend the meeting. On behalf of the Social Security Dep. of MoF, Mr. Wang extended appreciation to experts from China and Europe and project organizers for the support in the preparatory work of the meeting. After briefly introducing the project, Mr. Wang underlines that the research on the topic “An integrated system for the coordinated management of the social assistance system” (one of the three research area within 2017 activity plan of C2) is perfectly in line with one of the objectives of the 13th 5 Year Plan, notably to promote the integration of the social assistance resources, coordination of social assistance schemes, and coordination among various departments and authorities dealing with social assistance to overcome the fragmentation of the overall system. The C2 project has already achieved preliminary results on the research, the meeting will assess the main achievements and evaluate next step of the cooperation.

Mr. Bruni, while introducing the EU experts, expressed his thanks to the MoF and all the participants for the great cooperation. Prof. Jiang Zhen drafted a report on the Chinese background situation, which well identifies the crucial challenges that the government is facing in optimizing the coordination of the social assistance system. Yet the EU experiences of the Czeck Republic, UK, Sweden, Netherlands and Italy provide a spectrum of best practices that can be useful to China. In particular, Mr. Pavel Janeček, provided a report on the Czech Republic Experience; Mel Cousin provided best practice on Northern Europe countries- UK, Sweden and the Netherlands, while Renzo Turatto provided the report on the Italian experience. Mr Alessandro Longhi, official from the Italian institute of Social Protection introduced the Italian database system “social assistance registry”. The results of the panel discussion together with the most interesting EU experiences, and the indications provided by Prof. Jiang will open the road to the formulation of policy suggestions that will be formalized at the Workshop.

MORNING SESSION Moderator: Mr. Wang Xiong, Director of the Dibao Division Social Security Department of MoF

Keynote 1: The Coordination of Social Assistance Resources: the Chinese context Speaker: Jiang Zhen (National Academy of Economic Strategy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Department of Taxation, Associate Research Fellow)

According to the requirements of the third, fourth, and fifth plenary sessions of the 18th CPC Central Committee, the coordinated social assistance system ought to exert its function more effectively in guaranteeing the basic living standard of the citizens, and it’s also an inevitable step to achieve the healthy and sustainable development of the social assistance system and to improve the performance of financial expenditure. In order to achieve this aim, it is recommended to analyse, evaluate, and improve the design and implementation of the Chinese social assistance system, to optimize the top-level design, to clarify the functions of every social assistance policy, to bring into perfection the framework, specific arrangements and operation schemes for the institutional integration and coordination, and eventually to contribute to the healthy and sustainable development of social assistance system.

This project adheres to such a principle: “theoretically forward-looking, internationally contrastive, reality-oriented, history-witnessing, finding opportunities, achieving consensus, forming policy,

promoting reform”, and it focuses on the institutional coordination of social assistance to provide support for the Chinese government to make decisions about the systems and policies related to the construction of a coordinated social assistance system, and to design the implementation plans with thorough research, analysis and consideration.

1. Evolution of the Chinese social assistance system

As early as February 1993, The Implementation Plan for the Reforms of the Old-age Insurance System for Urban Workers in Shanghai was promulgated, and Shanghai took initiatives in the establishment of the Minimum Living Standard Guarantee System. In 1996, the Ministry of Civil Affairs outspread the experience of Shanghai and some other cities, starting to promote this system in every city of China. Shortly, in September 1997, the State Council promulgated the Notice on the Establishment of City Residents’ Minimum Living Standard Guarantee System in the Whole Country, marking the national-wide establishment of this system, and this notice stipulates that by the end of 1999, the minimum living standard guarantee system for city residents should have been established in every city and every county where the local government resides, indicating that dibao system has been made an institutional policy to guarantee the subsistence of low-income urban groups; In September 1999, the State Council issued Regulations on the Minimum Living Standard of Urban Residents. Actually, during the 1990s, the Chinese government has commenced the low-rent housing program, medical assistance, education assistance, rural minimum living standard guarantee system, and employment assistance, etc. Since the beginning of this century, the expenditure scope and the coverage of dibao system have been growing rapidly in China. Urban residents’ dibao expenditure in total soared from 2,700 million yuan in 2000 to 72,200 million yuan in 2014; in rural areas, the amount zoomed from 36,300 million yuan in 2009 to 87,000 million yuan in 2014. In 2014, dibao expenditure in urban and rural areas accounted for 0.25% of China’s gross domestic product (GDP), and it took up more than 1% of the total government expenditure. At the same time, the urban dibao-receiving population climbed from 4,030,000 in 2000 to 11, 710,000 in 2001, reaching the historical peak of 23,460,000 in 2009, then fell to 18,770,000 in 2014; the rural dibao population surged from 3,050, 000 in 2001 to 52,070,000 in 2014.

This is the primary period of the establishment of a reliable and systematic protection for the vulnerable groups in China, and just as Zheng Gongcheng, a renowned theorist in the field of social security study, puts it, social assistance system has transformed from exclusively dependent on the civil affairs departments into open to various sources of social assistance, from the government’s bestow into the lawful rights of citizens, from monomial assistance to comprehensive assistance, from urban-rural segmentation into urban-rural integration. During this stage, the social assistance system made great achievements, but viewed from a general perspective, it was still scattered in nature, with many a relief programs parallel to each other in operation.

In February 2014, the State Council promulgated the Interim Measures of Social Assistance (Decree No. 649 of the State Council), which stipulated the construction of a coordinated social assistance system, consisting mainly of minimum living standard guarantee, living support for the destitute, disaster victim relief, medical assistance, education assistance, housing assistance, employment assistance and temporary assistance. Full-scale and multi-disciplinary, this system strengthens the

participation of social forces and adheres to the principle: to guarantee subsistence, to assistance those in emergency and difficulty, and to value sustainability. It has succeeded in laying an institutional foundation to guarantee the basic living for all citizens, to promote social justice, and to maintain social harmony and stability. The successful establishment of a social assistance system has huge significance, for it puts an end to the binary pattern of China's social assistance system. In fact, this decree serves as the foundation for the integration of social assistance system. However, it is not an easy task to complete overnight, but a challenging job demanding gradual reforms. Apparently, the department segmentation in social assistance system stands in the way of the coordination of various departments, and correspondingly, the fact that aid resources are scattered among the different departments frustrates the sustainable development of social assistance system, and has severe impact on income distribution and social equity.

2. The current situation

To begin with, the functional segmentation among the various sectors of social assistance system and the subsequent dispersion of assistance funds are still prominent problems that have an impact on the comprehensive efficiency of the social assistance funds.

Second, it's an urgent task to coordinate the objectives of social assistance and poverty alleviation program.

Thirdly, welfare bundling has emerged as a prominent problem, resulting in insufficient social assistance for some groups and surplus assistance for others who become increasingly dependent on dibao.

Fourthly, the fact that relief resources are dispersed among the departments as a result of functional segmentation severely hinders the formation of a joint force of all the funds. In some areas, the high assistance standards tend to discourage working motivations.

Lastly, the management of the social assistance coordination should be more dynamic. The primary objective of social relief coordination is to guarantee the basic living for the eligible relief targets. It's necessary for the managerial departments to make dynamic evaluation of the economic conditions of these people.

3. Promoting the policy coordination

To start with, while the administrative functions remain unaltered for the categorical assistance, it's necessary to probe into comprehensive assistance and improve the policy coordination.

Secondly, since it's a long-term goal to achieve the efficient coordination and integration, it's wise to encourage a gradual process of integration between dibao project and other social assistance policies.

Thirdly, it's important to optimize the functional division among various relief policies, and to foster a gradient and categorical relief scheme.

Lastly, it's necessary to emphasize the convergence between social assistance system and other policies (e.g. reemployment) and to encourage the beneficiaries to be self-dependent.

In respect to policy coordination, the following several challenges are to be overcome:

On the one hand, the problem of information isolation caused by segmentation between different departments hinders the convergence of social relief policies. Secondly, the institutions responsible for social relief coordination are not efficient in fulfilling their duties, and we need to establish a mechanism for regular communication and information exchange.

4. Promoting the financial coordination

Financial coordination is one crucial part to achieve a well-coordinated social assistance system. Lately, in every province, autonomous region and municipality, an innovative format of fund management is roughly created, which is suitable to the local conditions.

Firstly, it's necessary to strengthen the integration of the relief fund at the level of fiscal budget management, to consolidate the legitimacy of assistance fund management, and to optimize the budget structure of the relief expenditure. All these will enhance the overall coordination of budget management among relevant departments. Secondly, it's reasonable to build up a platform for the coordinated management and the use of relief fund. The relief fund "reservoir" should be constructed in conformity with the direction in which the relief fund is used, and it's vital to genuinely improve the local government's capacity to coordinate fund management and use. The relief fund reservoir is an alternative of budget integration. Thirdly, it is advisable to pay close attention to the coordinated use of relief fund in the present year and the previous ones, to integrate the supplemental capital, and to revitalize the stock, so as to effectively improve the efficiency of financial funds use. Fourthly, the coordinated use of relief fund means more than the aggregation of every single relief fund, and it is of great significance to clarify the functions of each social assistance program, and to formulate relief projects in accordance with factual demands, guarding against assistance repetitions and overlapping in the relief programs of similar nature.

5. Promoting the cross-sectoral coordination

It's important to build up a cross-sectoral coordination mechanism, "one department's undertaking and multi-sectoral cooperation", and to retain a clear duty division based on the power and responsibility of the government at each level and each department involved.

To start with, the basic content of coordination among relief sectors is the establishment of coordination mechanism across different departments related to social assistance programs. Secondly, based on the notion of duty division and function coordination among various sectors, it's possible to internalize functional integration and create the mechanism of "one department's undertaking and multi-sectoral cooperation" so as to offer timely and convenient assistance to the people in need. Thirdly, based on a single window service experience, some localities even integrate the functions of the social relief programs, and establish a specialized agency to be solely responsible for relief arrangements.

6. Promoting the information coordination

Information coordination plays a crucial part in the integration of social assistance programs. As the corner stone for relevant researches in other aspects of social assistance integration, it calls for regulated information coordination and sharing system that is open to decision-makers, administrators, and practitioners. It's important to promote the establishment of a cross-sectoral, multi-level information platform for social assistance management, and to strengthen the dynamic management of relief targets.

Firstly, it's necessary to create an "integrated" social assistance information platform, which can guide, manage and incorporate assistance resources, provide information guarantee for overall integration of social assistance system.

Secondly, it's vital to give full play to the information platform in dealing with the problem about the information asymmetry of relief targets. Through overall information comparison and sharing, assistance information is to be available on the network, thereby it promotes information integration and convergence. It is organically combined with the establishment and improvement of the mechanism that is applied in the verification and management of the economic status of beneficiary household.

Keynote 2: The Czech Republic Experience Speaker: Pavel Janeček (Head of International Cooperation Unit, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Czech Republic)

1. Administrative system of the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic has a homogenous population of 10.5 million. Minorities are small. Territory is compact with no enclaves. The territory is divided into 14 regions, one of which is the capital city, Prague. The regions are the highest level of self-government (municipalities forming the second level).

The public administration has two components – central government (many authorities having their subsidiaries in the regions) and self-government (municipalities and regions). The tradition of central government is rather strong (regions established late – in 1997).

2. Social assistance administration

Social Assistance schemes were newly established after 1990 as a part of the transition from planned to market economy. Until 2003, it was administered by District Authorities (bodies of the central government);

In 2003, selected municipalities took over social assistance (intention to make them the main social assistance authorities). However, the overall responsible authority was the Government – is set the rules (legislation and methodology) and provided the funds from the state budget. Social Assistance was therefore a responsible delegated from the Government to the municipalities.

The intention to transfer social assistance from Government to self-government was abandoned by 2004. In 2004, the implementation of the State Social Support scheme was transferred from the municipalities to Government authorities – the Labour Offices operating on the district level (76 districts + Prague).

However, when the Assistance in Material Need scheme was introduced in 2006, the responsible first-line authorities were the municipalities. Until 2011-12, some of Social Assistance schemes were implemented by the Labour Offices (State Social Support), some by the municipalities (Assistance in Material Need).

At the same time, all appeals were handled by the Regional Authorities. The situation had many disadvantages: Citizens had to visit several authorities to apply for all benefits relevant in their particular situation. Lack of coordination between the municipalities (and regions) and the Labour Offices. For some time, the Regional Authorities served as appellate bodies for the Labour Offices – which were at the same time subordinate to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA). The municipalities (and the Labour Offices as well) differed in practise despite methodological instructions issued by the MoLSA.

The first attempt to concentrate the whole social assistance under a central government authority (in 2007) was unsuccessful.

3. Labour Office of the Czech Republic

In 2011, the Labour Office of the Czech Republic was established. It replaced the previous 77 individual Labour Offices. The Labour Office is a central body subordinate to the MoLSA, has three-levels of management: headquarters; regional branches (14 – one in each region) and contact offices (first-line, 300+ offices).

In 2012, the Labour Office became the only authority deciding and paying the social assistance benefits (the responsibilities transferred from the municipalities). At the same time, the benefits for persons with disabilities were reformed (2 benefits instead of 10). The reasons for establishing the Labour Office and centralising of the social assistance tasks: creating a single, central authority with clear responsibilities; regional level of management to enable for smoother cooperation with the regions; establish synergies between the social assistance schemes (single IT system etc.) as well with those sections of the Labour Office dealing with unemployment; unify the practise in deciding upon the applications for benefits; and streamlining of the operational costs.

4. Problems bound with the creation of the Labour Office

The implementation of such reforms was too hasty and brought about serious problems. The new Labour Office was understaffed; the new IT systems were faulty, the Labour Office barely managed to pay the benefits in 2012. The stabilization of the Labour Office has taken several years (staff increase from 8 000 to 12 000, new IT providers).

5. Social Assistance- the four schemes

Since 2012, all the four social assistance schemes are administered by the Labour Office. These are: the State Social Support; the Benefits for Persons with Disabilities; Care Allowance; and the Benefits of Assistance in Material Need. The first three schemes are defined to provide income supplement in defined social situation. Assistance in Material Need is the last safety net.

6. Cooperation with other authorities

The Labour Office is the only authority with the power to decide on granting a social assistance benefit. The authorities involved may be different for each scheme or even with regard to different benefits. All the schemes use income test for some of the benefits. The applicant must provide evidence of his/her income (and the income of persons assessed jointly with him/her). He/She must obtain the data himself/herself.

The Labour Office is electronically connected with tax authorities and the Czech Social Security Administration. In theory, it is possible that the Labour Office may obtain all or most of data required. However, it is rather used to verify data provided by the applicant. For some benefits, income test is carried out. For the Parental Allowance, Sickness Insurance (administered by the Czech Social Administration) is also involved to determine the maximum monthly amount of the benefit.

7. Benefits for persons with disabilities

Income test is used to determine the financial contribution of the applicant with regard to the Grant for Special Aid. The health status of the applicant is being assessed. The Assessment is carried out by specialised physicians working in the CSSA (Medical Assessment Service). The certificate of a person with disability entitles its holder to some discounts and advantages provided by public and also by private entities.

8. Care Allowance

The benefit is awarded to persons dependent on a care provided by another person. The level of dependence on such care is determined by the Medical Assessment Service under the CSSA. The assessment by a CSSA physician is crucial for the decision on granting the benefit but the decision is taken by the Labour Office alone. Income test is required if the beneficiary applies for increase in the Allowance (one of the conditions is income under 2.0 multiple of the Living Minimum).

9. Assistance in material need

This program has a different goal: to solve the situation not to only provide the money. It includes motivational features: the benefit is lower if the beneficiary does not try to solve his/her situation. Benefits increase if the beneficiary is active. It is the only scheme using means test (income, property, claims which can be asserted to increase income, etc). Special role is assigned to the municipalities. The municipalities are obliged to try to find decent housing if a person in material need does not have it. They can veto granting of the Supplement for Housing in certain cases. They often organize the Public Work Service.

Essential part of the assistance in material need is social work. There, the role of municipalities is even stronger. The assistance in material need starts with social work. The first step is to carry out a social analysis of the applicant to identify his/her needs and means at his/her disposal. Social work may be provided by social workers who are employees of the Labour Office or by social workers of the relevant municipality. The cooperation between the Labour Office and the social workers of the municipality is essential for assistance in material need. The cooperation is set on a case-by-case basis. It may involve also other organizations (social services providers etc.). A recommended form of cooperation is the case conference; the municipalities have access to the Unified information system and both sides are obliged to mutually exchange information.

10. Overall Assessment

The Czech social assistance schemes achieve good results in terms of protection from income poverty and in terms of the costs. There are, however, certain situations where the social benefits may create inactivity traps, especially when income is tested and the income of the assessed person is close to the threshold of entitlement to a particular social benefit such as Child Allowance (i.e. you earn CZK 100 more by work and lose benefit worth of CZK 700). The Czech Republic has chosen the centralised model for social assistance benefits: all paid from the state budget; all administered by the Labour Office; managed with an integrated IT.

In 3 of the 4 schemes, this is without doubt a working solution. Those 3 schemes deal only with income support in clearly defined situations.

There is even potential for improving the inter-institutional cooperation with regard to obtaining data needed for the assessment of an application.

In Assistance in Material Need, income support is rather a tool than the aim – a more individualised approach is needed. As a whole, the Czech social protection system has excellent results with regard to income poverty: only 9.7 % of people were under the poverty line in 2015 (EU – 16.8 %); expenditure 19.7 % of GDP in 2014 (EU – 28.9 %).

The overall system is not able to deal with situations when money is not able to solve them or individual approach is required (i.e. twofold increase in number of socially excluded localities): limited prevention; absence of social housing policy; no clear rules for social work, lack of capacities; orientation on financial motivation and cost reduction; long stabilisation of the Labour Office.

The cooperation with municipalities is the key to go forward: the knowledge of the local situation; experience; social housing provision; interconnection with school, healthcare facilities, social services. Areas to be explored are: use of the paid benefits; prevention; combating the concentration of negative social phenomena; more individual approach.

AFTERNOON SESSION Moderator: Mr. Wang Xiong, Director of the Dibao Division Social Security Department of MoF

Keynote 3: The Northern Europe experience- UK, Sweden and the Netherlands Speaker: Mel Cousin (International Social Protection Expert)

The three countries selected provide an interesting variation in terms of their approach to social assistance. The UK has a highly centralised system while Sweden and the Netherlands have locally-administered systems but the Netherlands system is more centrally driven with financial incentives for local governments to follow central policy while Sweden leaves more autonomy to local government.

Basic data in relation to the economic and demographic status of the three countries is set out below.

Country	Population in million (2015)	GDP per capita per annum (\$) (2015)
Netherlands	16.9	45,210
Sweden	9.8	51,604
United Kingdom	65.1	40,412

The three countries range from the relatively small (Sweden) to one of the largest EU member states (UK). They are all among the wealthier member states which tend to have better developed models of social protection.

The three countries also provide an interesting comparison of the approach adopted by EU countries as they are generally seen as representing different welfare types within the European model. Sweden is the archetype of the Scandinavian or Nordic model. The United Kingdom is the main liberal welfare state in Europe. The Netherlands has its origins in the continental welfare model (like countries such as France and Germany) but can now be seen largely as *sui generis* (in a class by itself). The Netherlands has introduced a range of innovative reforms across different types of social protection and, as we will see, this also applies to social assistance.

1. Social assistance-minimum income

The Dutch system of social assistance is now established under the Participation Act (Participatiewet) which replaced the Work and Social Assistance Act (WWB) in 2015 and integrated several acts into one system. Social security in the Netherlands is governed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW) but social assistance is administered by the local municipalities. The national authorities are responsible for the general benefit levels in the social assistance scheme and for monitoring the implementation of the social assistance by municipalities. There are 390 municipalities in the Netherlands. Amsterdam has the highest population with 810,909 residents but many are very small.

The Participation Act provides social assistance to anyone aged 18 years and over legally residing in the Netherlands who has insufficient means to support him or herself. The principal idea behind the Participation Act is that everyone should have the opportunity to participate fully in society, preferably through a regular job. The Participation Act replaced the Work and Social Assistance Act (WWB), the Sheltered Employment Act (Wet Sociale Werkvoorziening, WSW) and part of the Disablement Assistance Act for Handicapped Young Persons (Wajong). From 2015, access to the Wajong is limited to people not able to work. People who are capable of working now form part of the target group of the Participation Act.

The main social assistance payment in Sweden is known as Ekonomiskt bistånd (Financial Aid). In contrast to most other Swedish social security payments this is administered by municipalities. Sweden has 290 municipalities, and in terms of implementation, these have substantial leeway. However, the national legislation (the Social Services Act) sets out the rules for the scheme including uniform national basic rates of assistance. Municipalities are allowed to pay more, but not less. The Social Service Act states that the municipality has the ultimate responsibility to make sure that those who stay in the municipality gets the support they need in order to reach a reasonable standard of living. Financial aid falls under the responsibility of National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen) which is a government agency under the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. The Board issues guidelines to the municipalities on the administration of financial aid.

Financial aid is a general safety net payment which covers all people from 18 years of age and up. It includes both people who are unemployed and, subject to a means-test, people who are in work. All people residing in Sweden may apply for social assistance. People with a Swedish residence permit, as well as EU and European Economic Area (EEA) citizens who either work or are actively looking for work, have the same right to apply for social assistance as Swedish citizens. People without a Swedish residence permit cannot receive social assistance, except money to cover emergency needs (usually support with travel expenses to their place of residence).

Income support is the main social assistance ‘safety net’ payment in the UK. Unlike other countries examined here, however, the UK also has separate means-tested schemes for unemployed

(jobseekers allowance) and disabled (employment and support allowance) claimants. All these schemes are administered by the Department of Work and Pensions.

Originally, IS was a broad-based safety net scheme for persons whose resources were insufficient to meet their needs. However, over time, IS has been narrowed down to a more restricted group and people have been transferred to work-related benefits. In 1996, about 1.5 million claimants were transferred to the new jobseekers allowance (JSA). From 2000, people over 60 are no longer entitled to IS and a claim a separate ‘pension credit’ instead. Subsequently, from 2008 lone parents with children over the age of 5 have also been transferred to JSA. From 2008, employment and support allowance (ESA) also replaced income support paid on the grounds of incapacity for new claims.

The UK is currently introducing a major reform of its working-age benefits with the introduction of a new ‘universal credit’ (UC) scheme to replace existing schemes for both in-work and out-of-work claimants. The UC reform aims to restructure the benefit system, to create one single income-replacement benefit for working-age adults which will unify the current system of means-tested out-of-work benefits, tax credits and support for housing. It aims to improve work incentives by allowing individuals to keep more of their income as they move into work, and by introducing a smoother and more transparent reduction of benefits when they increase their earnings.

Basic data in relation to the social assistance system of the three countries is set out below.

Country	Netherlands	Sweden	UK
Main social assistance	Participation Act	Ekonomiskt bistånd (Financial Aid)	Income Support
Groups Covered	All with work capacity	All people from 18 years of age and up	Originally broad but now limited to lone parents and carers
Other minimum income payment	Separate benefit for persons with disabilities without work capacity	-	Separate payments for unemployed (jobseekers allowance) and people with disabilities (employment & support allowance)

Basic data in relation to the administration and funding of the three countries is set out below.

Country	Netherlands	Sweden	UK
Administration	Local municipalities	Local municipalities	Local offices of central ministry
Funding	Nationally funded but with financial incentives for municipalities to reduce costs	Funded by the municipalities from local taxation (about 70% from local income tax)	Centrally funded

2. Integration of social assistance schemes and policies

Social assistance schemes act as a residual or ‘safety-net’ scheme. Share data with other key social security agencies to ensure integrated administration of benefits through systems such as Suwinet (Netherlands) and SSBTEK (Sweden). The co-ordination with employment services has been a priority in the Netherlands and the UK.

3. Classification and methodologies to assess eligibility

The following income is taken into account: Rights/actions concerning property including personal property (moveable assets, capital, etc.); Income and (other) benefits (earnings from work, legal support from spouse; other social protection benefits, etc.). Means testing is set out in Laws and Regulations. Detailed guidelines are provided for implementing agencies. Agencies use data sharing through IT systems to control and check means-testing.

4. Benefit bundling, benefit traps and incentives to work

In the Netherlands and Sweden the entitlement to social assistance does not act as a passport to other benefits

One of the main ways of overcoming benefit traps and disincentives has been through a focus on active labour market policies.

The UK adopted an ambitious reform of all working-age social assistance benefits (universal credit) which is intended to address the issue of benefit traps and disincentives in a more comprehensive manner.

5. The role of central and local government

In the Netherlands and Sweden the social assistance scheme is national but is administered locally. In the UK, it is a national scheme which is administered by the local offices of a national agency. Funding is also national. In Sweden, funding is provided by the municipalities (mainly from local taxation) as part of an overall scheme of local government finance which involves support from central government. In the Netherlands, funding is provided mainly by the national government but provides an incentive to the municipalities to get claimants of social assistance back to work and to reduce claim-loads.

6. Netherlands example

The distribution of resources is provided to municipalities based on statistical analysis which calculates need for assistance based on local data

The factors taken into account include: household characteristics (e.g. single parent; presence of a person aged 15-24 years; presence of a person aged 55 years-old age pension; living in social housing; education levels; person with a disability); area characteristics (e.g. property values; level of unemployment; population growth; labour market opportunities).

If the municipality’s expenditure is higher than the target amount, the municipality has to cover the additional costs.

If their social assistance payments are less, they may use these funds for other municipal purposes.

Under certain conditions, municipalities in deficit are eligible for a supplementary budget from the Ministry.

7. Integration and coordination of funds

Funding of social assistance in the three countries appears to be more straightforward than in China.

In the UK, it is part of the national budget and subject to the general rules and controls of the national budget. As IS is entirely funded from central government, this forms part of the national budget and is subject to the general budget rules. The expenditure of IS is subject to audit by the National Audit Office.

In Sweden, social assistance is funded by the municipalities from local taxation. About 70% of municipalities' revenues come from locally generated income tax. The remainder consists mainly of general and earmarked grants (16%) and local charges and fees (10%). As such funding for social assistance forms part of the municipality's budget which must be agreed annually to cover the next three years. The Local Government Act includes a balanced budget requirement which means that the budget of a local authority must, in general, be drawn up so that income exceeds expenditure.¹ The Local Government Act states that local governments shall exercise good financial management in their activities. The state supervises local authorities through government agencies like the National Board of Health and Welfare. Supervision must have both a scrutinizing and a supportive element. Government agencies cannot declare local government decisions invalid, but they can in certain cases initiate a judicial review or impose a financial penalty on a municipality.

The Netherlands is one of the few examples of an EU country which uses financial incentives to encourage local administrations to be more efficient in their implementation of social assistance. The Dutch social assistance is nationally financed from general revenues of the central government. Dutch municipalities receive two different budget allocations: the income budget for benefits and the work budget for reintegration activities.

Since benefit eligibility is centrally regulated, municipalities can only affect their financial position by reducing the number of people who require social assistance (e.g. by providing better employment services), or by stricter enforcement of eligibility requirements, or both. This financing system is intended to give the municipalities a strong incentive for labour market integration of social assistance recipients.

In the Netherlands, municipalities must provide detailed data to the relevant Ministry in order to secure funding for the coming year. At the national level, the Ministry funding again forms part of the national budget.

Thus, funding is transparent and subject to control by the relevant audit bodies.

8. Information platforms

In the Netherlands: - Suwinet user by municipalities (and employment agencies) to manage data in the implementation of social assistance and employment services. Public agencies e.g. Tax Office, Student Data Authority, Land Registry, National Road Authority and the UWV social share personal information with municipalities.

In Sweden: - Digital service for financial aid (SSBTEK) is an electronic service that supports and simplifies the management of cases in financial assistance. More than 220 municipalities now use this service. The Social Insurance Agency is responsible for technical management and operation of the service on behalf of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL). Municipalities can get data from a range of agencies including the Social Insurance Agency, tax authorities, student finance agency, etc

9. Main challenges

¹ There are exceptions for 'exception reasons' such as a strong financial position or major restructuring actions but the deficit must be paid of in the following years.

Netherlands - ensuring that all stakeholders work together more effectively to address the challenges and ensuring that claimants who are further from the labour force can benefit from the reforms

Sweden - how to find ways to cope with the rising trend towards longer durations on social assistance and to help recipients find work. Sweden is also working towards rolling out its information platform to all municipalities

UK - implementation of the new universal credit system

Keynote 4: The Italian experience Speaker: Renzo Turatto (International Policy Expert)

1. The Italian Constitution

Art.38 of the Italian constitution affirms that the State provides social assistance to every citizen who is unable to work and in state of economic need.

Social assistance is generally referred to the large variety of policies, including both monetary and in-kind benefits, which have been made progressively available to people in need and which are financed by general tax revenue and do not depend on contributions paid by the beneficiary.

The main actor in charge of these policies is the State, through the national institute for social protection (Istituto Nazionale di Previdenza Sociale, INPS). In addition, a significant role, still to be fully exploited, is given to the local authorities (regions, provinces and municipalities), and other public and private actors.

2. Social security: the policies

Today's main national social assistance policies in Italy are targeted to two priority areas: people affected by extreme poverty and people who are experiencing income losses due to reduction, suspension or loss of employment. The first area includes:

- Elderly people: people over 65 are entitled to a monthly allowance (social allowance) and an e-voucher (social card) to pay for essential goods (i.e. food, house bills, ...). A retirement benefit integration is also granted to poor pensioners getting a below-the-minimum pension.
- Families: employees with certified economic need are entitled to a household allowance delivered by the employer. In addition, poor families with a small child under the age of three are also entitled to the social card e-voucher. A new, more targeted e-voucher (SIA) provides larger benefits for families with young or disabled children or where the wife is pregnant. Mothers with no social security benefits can claim the maternity allowance, as well as the new-born allowance. A specific household allowance, delivered by municipalities, is also granted to families with more than three children.
- Disabled people: disabled people in working age (18-65 years old) in economic need, who are unable to work, are entitled to an incapacity benefit¹⁰, or an assistance allowance (in case of partial inability). A school attendance allowance is granted to all underage disabled people to promote their participation in education and training. In addition, (different) attendance allowances¹⁰ are granted (regardless of age and income) to blinds, deaf and dumb, and to people suffering complete disability.

The second area includes those who are:

- Unemployed: the 2015 labour market reform introduced a new unemployment insurance schema (NASPI) which grants 75% of the last four years' average salary, for half the time the beneficiary spent at work in the same four year. In addition, an experimental measure (ASDI) is granted to those who are still unemployed once NASPI has expired.
- Lay off: employees working in Industry, Construction or Business services are entitled to a complementary insurance scheme covering up to 80% of the wage reduction, provided that the business counts more than 15 employees. Depending on the type of business and on the cause of reduction, the measure is provided by INPS or the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (CIGO-CIGS). For businesses which are not entitled to these measures, there is the possibility to establish ad hoc Solidarity Funds, after agreement between employees and trade unions.

Besides national social assistance schemes, regions and municipalities also contribute to tackling absolute poverty. A range of minimum income schemes to tackle absolute poverty have been experimented², and some municipalities have also set up autonomous income support schemes and bonuses for electricity and gas expenditure.

3. Social security: how does it cost?

Today's State expenditure in social assistance measures amounts to 51 billion Euros. social assistance expenditure is largely driven by disability allowances, unemployment benefits, retirement benefits integration and social allowances. All these measures are financed by the State budget, via general taxation, and managed/paid by INPS which provides for them through a dedicated, independent, account system (*Gias*). However, integration of wages for lay off (*CIGO*) relies mainly on contributions made by those who benefit from the treatment.

In addition to this, the expenditure at the local level should also be considered. According to law, regions and municipalities still play a prominent role in social services. In fact, they are directly responsible for a large part of the social services provision as well as of the social assistance scheme. They finance these services through local tax revenues, which are integrated by the State budget in case of funds inadequacy.

As reported in the national revision on social services and interventions delivered at the local level carried out by the Ministry of Economy and Finance and ISTAT, the total expenditure on social services and interventions at the municipal level was 6912 million euros in 2014. Monetary transfers alone amounted to 1860 million euros.

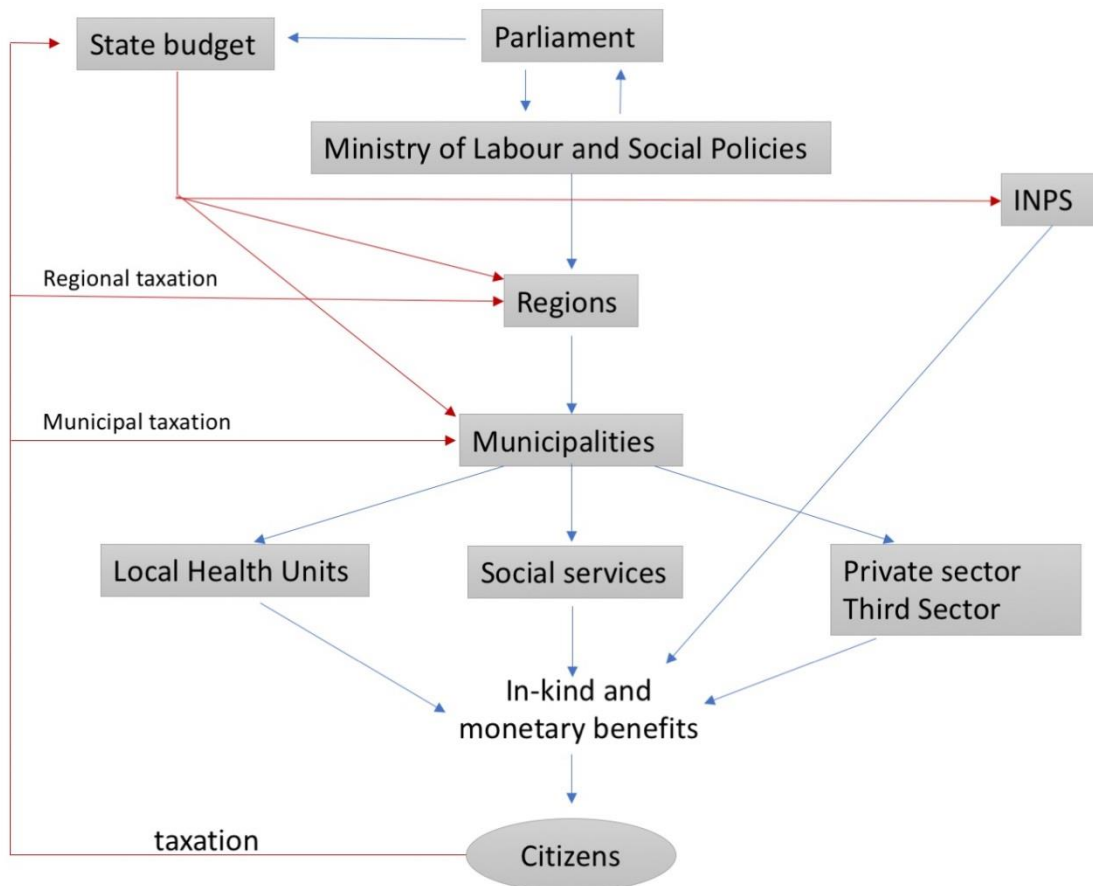
4. The governance

Law 328/2000 established the essential governance framework for the integration of social policies and social services. In coherence with it the 2001 constitutional reform transferred jurisdiction on social assistance to Regions, who are in charge of social policies programming, coordination and

² For details on regional minimum income schemes, see Jessoula et al. (2015).

orientation as well as monitoring and evaluation. The State still has the responsibility to define the essential levels of social service provision (*Leps*). On the other hand a key role is also given to Local authorities: while contributing to the regional programming process, they are responsible for the service implementation by ensuring networking with non-state actors and a broad community participation.

Today the strategic planning system entails National, Regional and Local Action Plans.



As for the main challenges of current policies, experts agree on three main issues:

- 1) The incoherence in the governance design: passive subsidiarity with an unbalanced responsibilities-resources distribution among national government, local authorities, and non-institutional actor;
- 2) policy fragmentation (i.e. lack of fine tuning management tools);
- 3) the need of high effectiveness-efficiency standards leads to highly targeted measures

Looking at the long-term scenario, the large immigration flows coming from Africa and Middle Est will produce a radical shift (non necessarily for worst) on the Italian society and economy.

Keynote 5: The Social Assistance Registry: a functional database of enhanced control **Speaker: Mr. Alessandro Longhi (INPS, General Directorate of Social Safety Nets)**

1. What is the Social Assistance Registry

The Social Assistance Registry was set up at INPS. It contains the data required for the Italian welfare system and is the most important tool for collecting information on beneficiaries, social benefits and services granted and delivered to people who need support from social assistance institutions.

2. Information contained in Social Assistance Registry

It contains: data on social assistance benefits granted after means testing through the Economic Situation Indicator («ISEE»); data on non-means tested benefits (not linked to «ISEE»); data on benefits, provision of services and in-kind assistance granted after the assessment by professional social workers. This latter provision is composed of three sections relating to the following: children, adolescence and family («SINBA»); disabled and care-dependent people (SINA); poverty, social exclusion and other forms of disadvantage (SIP).

3. Goals

The Social Assistance Registry will play an important role in order to ensure: a thorough knowledge of social needs and a coherent integration of social service interventions; that information and data sent by all public bodies involved in Social Assistance will complete the data which are already recorded in other Inps databases and which are available on the Social Assistance Registry, in the New Health Information System and the placement database targeted.

The Social Assistance Registry, when fully completed, will operate as a tool for complex planning: social expenditure and enhanced control against fraud and, therefore, a means to secure a saving of public money; welfare measures targeted to alleviate specific needs of citizens.

4. Advantages

Main advantages are: a timely consultation through access to information; central aggregation of data for monitoring purposes, studies, survey and statistical analysis; a facility for data consultation of social benefits paid by INPS to beneficiaries on behalf of other institutions (family allowances, maternity allowances, purchasing card, SIA, welfare, disability, career's allowance, etc.); control over regularity and accuracy of the “DSU” declarations which need to be coherent to ISEE and to all services or benefits provided based on the data; communication on discrepancies found on ISEE declarations and the clawback of any undue payments and consequent imposition of sanctions (where applicable) -(to avoid the holding of officials liable for damage to the central treasury); planning expenditure for activities and social services thanks to monitoring, control, analysis and studies.

5. Flow of information

Data are automatically and require to be transmitted by local authorities and any other institution which provides social benefits and services. Data transmission occurs through an online channel (Inps website or applications set up with the collaboration of institutions involved) and compliance with some technical procedures. The collaboration of institutions is crucial to provide the Registry

with correct and coherent information pursuant to their obligations to electronically transmit data regarding beneficiaries and benefits/services.

Inps has established a technical assistance team of experts to help officials of institutions for advice and assistance and can be easily contacted by telephone or email. Technical documents and procedures are published on INPS web site, together with explanation and clarification to guide institutions in transmitting data. The transmission of information can be achieved across multiple channels (xsd, xml and csv), which are fundamental to ensure the proper upload of files.

6. State-of-the-Art

Inps Directorial Decree n. 8, 10 April 2015, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Protection of Personal Data Authority, commenced the uploading of the first component of the Registry: “La Banca dati delle prestazioni sociali agevolate” (BDPSA), on the basis of the framework law: D.M. 8th March, 2013.

The BDPSA was terminated on the 3th April 2017 and the new system of Social Assistance Registry was set up. The Directorial Decree INPS n. 103, 15th September 2016, with the consultation of Ministry of Labour, the Protection of Personal Data Authority and Tax Office, established the other two components of the Registry: database of social benefits (BDPS) and database of beneficiaries who qualify for benefits after the assessment of welfare officers (BDVM), according to D.M. 206/2014, which was enacted on 25th March 2015.

7. Legislative Innovations

D.M. (Decree of Minister) 26 September 2016 “*2016 Financial provision allotment of the National Fund for dependents*” foresees that all the information sent by Institutions to the Registry, will be used by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy to assess the total number of people with serious disabilities and thus define «*the basic level of allowances to be granted to people with serious disability all over Italy, within the limit of the provision available by the Fund for dependents*»

D.M. 23 November 2016 “*Eligibility (qualifying) criteria for social assistance measures, care and protection from Funds for people with serious disability without any family support and distribution of the 2016 resources to Regions*” (so called «*dopo di noi*» «after us») foresees that all the information sent by Institutions to the Registry, will be used by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy to assess the total number of people with serious disability without any family support.

The law n. 33, 15th March 2017 “*Delegation of the regulations against poverty, the re-organisation of allowances and the intervention and social services system*”, foresees the strengthening of the Social Assistance Registry and, beyond that, the requirement of data transmission by the Institutions, including alerts in cases of undue allowances and the need to impose sanctions on defaulters.

The legal Decree against the poverty which is in the process of being approved, foresees very interesting innovation: Reorganization of all database and setting up of a Single Integrated System of Social Services that will include the Registry (and will be called Information System of Allowances and Social Needs; integration with other database (ISEE, BDREI, New Information System of Health Service, BD active and passive policies, BD targeted allotment, unique information system of labour policies and information system of Ministry of Education, University and Scientific Research); data transmission by Municipalities even through Regions if regional laws allowed it; failure to send data will be considered an offence and result in disciplinary sanctions and the most serious administrative offences will be considered a liability for tax losses.

A little over a year into the first component of the Registry, the Registry on June 15, 2016, A submission of information on 934 municipalities and 44 other entities, for a total of 978 institutions; considering among the 44 other bodies are unions of municipalities and territorial areas, representatives of several municipalities, the total data cover more than 1000 bodies.

8. Inps duties

Inps is currently offering an information and advice service for institutions and through appropriate offices to help them to sort out problems arising with the implementation of the Registry

So far Inps has received 3000 requests of assistance, by email and phone. A FAQ section has been set up on Inps website and is also shared with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

In collaboration with institutions and to explore the highlights of Registry and problems on how to access the system, meetings have been held at: State-Regions conferences; meetings at regional level with Inps regional agencies, local authorities, ANCI and other organizations (17 meetings). Dissemination of best practices any time they are put into practice.

Inps is responsible of the development of some IT functions to facilitate the data flow (massive dispatch) and the use of database and thus creating more advantage for institutions. Inps organizes meetings with ANCI (Italian national association of Municipalities) to set up specific thematic webinars on RSA for the Municipalities offering them the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and INPS know-how.

It is important to continue the collaboration with the institutions and enhance synergies to boost the implementation of the information and thus put into practice the objectives outlined by the law.

Keynote 6: Hebei Province Experience Speaker: Wenzhou Liu

Hebei is a province with 52 poor counties defined by the State and the province, whose population are totally 5 million. On the one hand, funds to support poor people are not enough, but on the other hand, there are some funds that have been accumulated without having been used. The reason for such dilemma

is the fragmentation of management in the Social Assistance field, which involves many authorities. In 2012, the provincial government started the coordination of the SA agencies, schemes and funds. One of the step is setting up an information platform. Another step is providing a universal access to SA benefits, and SA funds are managed together by county governments, which can use the funds for any of the SA schemes according to the local reality. This process has been successful, but there are also some problems to be solved in the next stage: for example, the coordination of funds is not yet thorough, and SA standards are not yet clear.

Keynote 7: Shandong Province Experience Speaker: Wei Song

In Shandong, for the coordination of SA schemes and funds, the provincial government has set up 1 platform, and focuses on two ways of coordination. The 1 platform is the “Grand Assistance”, in which different SA schemes are administered in a unified way, and different procedures can be processed together. The 2 ways of coordination include the vertical way, which means SA schemes for a same need are unified as one scheme, and the horizontal way, which means SA schemes for different needs are coordinated in order to comprehensively help the beneficiaries who might have several needs. In the vertical coordination, urban and rural areas are also considered, which aims to lessen the gap of urban SA standard and rural standard. For assisting the coordination, integration in three aspects is conducted: information, funds and administration. In particular, for the integration of funds, the province has established an Information Checking platform, in which information provided by relevant authorities can be accessed.

Keynote 8: Anhui Province Experience Speaker: Meimei Sun

In compliance with the State Council’s Program on Promoting Coordination of Funds Provided by Public Finance (2015), and the MoF and MoCA’s Measure on Managing Central Government’s Subsidy for People in Need (2017), Social Assistance funds must be used through coordination. However, in reality, the SA schemes, policies, funding resources are fragmented, so many beneficiaries still enjoy overlapped benefits, or some beneficiaries under a same condition cannot enjoy benefits at a same level. In order to solve the problem, Anhui Provincial Government has coordinated the 8+1 SA programs. In particular, the funds for the 8+1 programs are unified as SA Funds, whose use is managed at the provincial level, with calculation method set by the provincial authority. Local governments can use the funds according to the formula, without considering the barrier among different programs. In addition, to reduce overlapped benefit, Anhui government set a new regulation that, for example, beneficiaries of Tekun (special vulnerable group) benefit cannot enjoy the benefit of Dibao at the same time, and an orphan that receives Orphan Benefit cannot be beneficiary of Tekun benefit at the same time, etc.

DISCUSSION

The discussion session mainly addressed the following topics:

- The coordination of employment policies with social security services, how to encourage jobless people re-enter the labor market
- The most important aspect of coordination within the social assistance system

- Positive effects of having an authority unifying all the practices under the same office
- Obstacles in collecting SA information
- China's provincial experiences will be unified in a common SA model

WRAP-UP by Xu Zhengzhong (*Prof. Chinese Academy of Governance*) **and CONCLUSION by Jiang Chunli**³ (*Vice Minister of Information, China Center for International Economic Exchanges*)

1.1 Jiang Zhen Report on The Development of a Coordinated System of Social Assistance Resources

Mr. Jiang Zhen put forward the proposal that the government should make an effort on four aspects, in order to improve the coordinated system, namely: the coordination of institution, that of funds, that of authorities and that of information. This proposal is a good reference for us when thinking about improving the coordination and effective use of resources, and it was also agreed by the experts during the discussion.

Problems: Mr. Jiang analyzed five major problems on the coordination of China's social assistance resources: 1, fragmentation of fund use resulted from fragmentation of authorities; 2, objectives of social assistance and poverty-reduction programs should be coordinated; 3, welfare bundling of Dibao recipients; 4, lack of work incentive due to generous benefits; and 5, lack of dynamic management in the coordinated system of social assistance resources.

Policy proposal: Mr. Jiang has proposed five points to improve the system: 1, clarifying functions and positions of social assistance programs and improving the coordination among the programs; 2, improving the coordination of funds on the basis of budgeting management; 3, taking advantage of cross-authority meeting or coordinating mechanisms, improving the coordination among authorities; 4, establishing a unified and comprehensive information platform to improve the coordination of information.

1.2 Pavel Janeček: Social Assistance in the Czech Republic

Mr. Pavel Janeček shared the experience of the Czech social assistance system and provided an objective analysis on the problems in its system. The SA system in the Czech Republic is centralized, all the funds are provided by the state budget. The Labour Office is universally responsible for the establishment, implementation, and supervision of the SA system. There is a unified system of SA in the Czech Republic. The Labour Office cooperates with municipalities in providing benefits to people in material needs, and the municipalities are committed with special roles, which helps reaching a more effective and accurate targeting of social assistance benefits.

³ Below is reported the speech by Jiang Chunli.

His opinions are valuable for us to learn from: 1. Central authority on social assistance should cooperate with municipalities; 2, the provision of SA in cash and in kind should be combined; 3, the system of SA resources should be combined with the sharing of departmental information.

The SA system in the Czech Republic is effective, providing a good reference for us in developing our SA system.

Key point: Throughout the evolution of the Czech SA system, the power on SA has been always mastered by the central government. There is a unified Labour Office to be the agency in charge of making decision and delivering benefits, and the power of municipalities had also been transferred to the central government.

There are three levels in the Czech SA system: the Headquarter of Labour Office, branches in the 14 regions, and localized contact points (more than 300).

Four programs in the Czech SA system: State Social Support; Benefits for Persons with Disabilities; Care Allowance; Benefits of Assistance in Material Need. The former three are to increase the income of groups in specific social situation, while the latter one is the last social safety-net.

1.3 Mel Cousins: An integrated system for the coordinated management of the social assistance system: the Experience of Netherland, Sweden and UK.

Mr. Mel Cousins analysed the experiences of the three countries from the perspectives of managerial regime, financing model and information platform, with analysis on 8 aspects of the integrated system for the coordinated management of SA. These three countries respectively represent three welfare regimes in EU. Comparison among these three cases helps us to understand deeper the features of SA under different welfare regimes, and broadens our sight into the solutions for coordinating social assistance resources.

Swedish welfare is the prototype of Scandinavian or Nordic regime, characterized by high level taxation. UK is the representative of liberal welfare, in which the responsibility of public welfare is narrow, and mainly focusing on the poor, while most social members get their welfare support from the private market. The Netherland adopts a continental welfare model, in which employment and contribution are linked to public social insurance.

1.4 Renzo Turatto: the Italian Experience

Mr. Turatto presented the Italian experience, targeting the SA beneficiaries and improving SA outcomes. The way that Italy enact policies in support of aged poor people and people losing employability is valuable for us. Some key points are: 1, distinguishing the function of social assistance from the function of social insurance in helping unemployed people; 2, reducing SA benefits for recipients according to the change of their employment; 3, funds for SA should be provided by the central government, while local governments should support with their own resources, in order to avoid the overlapping and trapping of benefits.

He has pointed out the challenges facing the SA, to which to pay attention: 1, the unbalanced distribution of SA resources, unbalanced managerial power and financing power; 2, fragmentation of SA policies and limitation on SA budget; 3, imperfect sharing of SA information, which results in failed communication and moral hazard; 4, challenges resulted from uncertainty of long-term SA policy.

1.5 Alessandro Longhi: SA registry: functional database for enhanced control

Mr. Longhi has presented the composition and application of the SA registry adopted by INPS, and shared with us the experience of information collecting, data transferring, system improving and legal support. He emphasized the role of the legal and institutional innovation in supporting the development and information sharing of SA system. This is valuable.

1.6 Experiences from Chinese provinces.

Mr. Liu Wenzhou, from Social Security Division of Hebei Provincial Hall of Finance, Ms. Song Wei, from SSD of Shandong PHF, and Ms. Sun Meimei, from SSD of Anhui PHF, have presented and shared with us experiences on the coordination of SA resources in their respective provinces, including the development of the system, use of the funds, management of beneficiaries, integration of information and construction of SA platform, etc.

I believe the result of the exchanges in this conference is useful for the Chinese and European sides to learn from each other in the field of coordination of SA resources.

2. Key Common Interest

2.1 SA resources should be coordinated effectively, in order to maximize the effect and avoid fragmentation of policies.

2.2 The government should take the leading role in coordinating SA resources, and should make effort on avoiding benefit bundling and welfare trapping, implementing SA with positive working incentives.

2.3 A SA platform system should be developed, in order to share information across different authorities, and avoid low effect in using SA resources.

2.4 Utilization of SA funds should be more effective, and SA for people in need should be provided in a more accurate way, in order to prevent SA from being social insurance.

3. Policy Proposals

SA is one of the important responsibilities of the government, and it is also a complicated and sophisticated job, which includes issues like development of schemes, protection of laws, sharing of information and control of moral hazard etc. According to the exchange in the conference, I conclude four points as the policy proposals for SA resource coordination:

3.1 The functions of the central government and provincial governments should be differentiated. The central government should lead the coordination, and should be responsible for unifying the institutions, standards, information systems and information sharing policies. At the same time, provincial governments should make effort on innovating SA approaches in the practice.

3.2 A good relation between a SA under the role of law and a SA with accurate targeting should be created, the functions of SA should be distinguished from the functions of social insurance, and the general effects and sustainability of SA resources should be improved.

3.3 A unified information system for SA should be created and information should be shared across authorities/departments. There should be a powerful support from the law, which is crucial for the sharing of information across different authorities.

3.4 In coordinating SA resources, there should be positive labor market and employment policies. SA resources should be used to effectively encourage beneficiaries who are able to work to participate in the labor market.

Conclusion by Wang Xiong

Mr. Wang Xiong closed the panel thanking all the participants and experts for the contribution to the successful meeting.

He fully agreed with the overview and proposals made by Prof. Jiang Zhen. As official of the MoF, he admits that the coordination among different authorities is one of the most difficult aspect, especially when making different policies, particularly in the data collection.

According to Wang Xiong it would be more efficient to start from the grassroot level to build up different models and then see which one is the most efficient. As per the EU experiences, they all provided valuable insights for China, yet the UK case might be particularly similar to the Chinese system, it would be useful to have more details on the UK reform.

Prepared by Ms. Valentina Pignotti

EU-China Social Protection Reform Project



Social Protection Reform Project
中国-欧盟社会保障改革项目

Component 2

第二部分

Panel Discussion

专家分组座谈

An integrated system for the coordinated management of the social assistance system

统筹社会救助资源系统

Ministry of Finance, P. R. China

中华人民共和国财政部

8:30-9:00	签到 Registration
9:00-9:15	欢迎致辞 财政部代表 王雄 (财政部社会保障司城乡低保处处长) 米凯乐·布鲁尼 (中欧社保改革项目第二部分欧方常驻专家) <i>Welcome Speeches by MoF Representative Wangxiong (Director, Dibao Division Social Security Department, MoF) and Michele Bruni (EU-China SPRP, Team Leader-C2 Resident Expert)</i> 主持人:王雄 Moderator: Wangxiong
9:15-9:45	主题发言1: 统筹社会救助资源系统: 中国国情 发言人: 蒋震 (中国社会科学院财经战略研究院副研究员) <i>Keynote 1: Coordination of Social Assistance Resource: the Chinese context Speaker: Prof. Jiang Zhen (National Academy of Economic Strategy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Department of Taxation, Associate Research Fellow)</i>
9:45-10:15	主题发言2: 捷克经验 发言人: 帕威尔·雅奈齐格 (捷克共和国劳动和社会事务部国际合作处, 处长) <i>Keynote 2: The Czech Republic Experience- Speaker:Pavel Janeček (Head of International Cooperation Unit, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Czech Republic)</i>
10:15-10:45	茶歇 Tea Break
10:45-11:15	主题发言3: 北欧国家经验: 英国、瑞典、荷兰 发言人: 梅恪行 (国际社会保障专家) <i>Keynote 3: The Northern Europe experience- UK, Sweden and the Netherlands - Speaker: Mel Cousin (International Social Protection Expert)</i>
11:15-11:45	主题发言4: 意大利经验 发言人: 连佐·途拉托 (国际政策专家) <i>Keynote 4: The Italian experience - Speaker: Renzo Turatto (International Policy Expert)</i>
11:45-12:15	主题发言5: 社会救助登记: 更优监控的功能性数据基础 发言人: 亚历山德罗·龙吉 (意大利国家社保署社会安全网司综合处, 官员) <i>Keynote 5: The Social Assistance Registry: a functional database of enhanced control Speaker: Mr. Alessandro Longhi (INPS, General Directorate of Social Safety Nets)</i>
12:15-14:00	午餐休息 Lunch Break
14:00-14:30	主题发言6: 河北省经验 发言人: 刘文洲 <i>Keynote 6: Hebei Province Experience Speaker: Wenzhou Liu</i>
14:30-15:00	主题发言7: 山东省经验 发言人: 宋玮 <i>Keynote 7: Shandong Province Experience Speaker: Wei Song</i>
15:00-15:30	主题发言8: 安徽省经验 发言人: 孙枚枚 <i>Keynote 8: Anhui Province Experience Speaker: Meimei Sun</i>
15:30-16:00	茶歇 Tea Break
16:00-16:30	讨论问答 Discussion, Q & A
16:30-17:15	点评人: 许正中 (国家行政学院教授) <i>Wrap up by Xu Zhengzhong (Prof. Chinese Academy of Governance) (15mins)</i> 总点评人: 姜春力 (中国国际经济交流中心信息部副主任、研究员) <i>Conclusion by Jiang Chunli (Vice Minister of Information, China Center for International Economic Exchanges) (20mins)</i> 主持人总结: 王雄 Conclusion by Wangxiong

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

List of participants
参会名单

EU-CHINA SPRP Component 2
Panel Discussion
on
中国-欧盟社会保障改革项目第二部分组座谈会

Topic 2.1.4 An integrated system for the coordinated management of the social assistance system
统筹社会救助资源系统.

Ministry of Finance, Beijing, August 29th, 2017
2017年8月29日, 北京, 财政部

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