



# BEUCITIZEN

BARRIERS TOWARDS EU CITIZENSHIP

## GENDERED AND GENERATIONAL ASPECTS OF SOCIAL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CIVIL CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS

### The findings of WPs ON GENDERED AND GENERATIONAL CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS

**Document Identifier**

D9.3: Report of an integrative seminar on the findings of WP5-8, also including WP3 and 4

**Version**

1.0

**Date Due**

31-08-2016

**Submission date**

15-08-2016

**WorkPackage**

9 Balancing Gender and Generational Citizenship

**Lead Beneficiary**

Centre for Social Policy and Intervention Studies,  
Utrecht University

**Dissemination Level**

PU



Grant Agreement Number 320294  
SSH.2012.1-1



## Change log

Version	Date	amended by	changes
0.1	10-08-2016	UU	Final draft version created
1.0			<i>Final version deliverable 9.3 created</i>

## Partners involved

number	partner name	People involved
1	Utrecht University	Trudie Knijn Rosanne Oomkens Maarten Prak Anna Gerbrandy
15	University of Trento	Elena Ioriatti
16	University of Turin	Manuela Naldini Arianna Santero
18	University of Oviedo	Sylvia Gomez Anson
22	University of Zurich/ Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals	Andrea Bianculli
25	Oxford University	Martin Seeleib-Kaiser

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report derives from the work of coordinators of Work Package 9 of the FP7 programme bEUcitizen coordinated by Utrecht University (NL) and the University of Turin (IT) and is based on the findings of four work packages focusing on the economic (WP5), social (WP6), civil (WP7) and political (WP8) citizenship rights with regards to gendered and generational biases in the access to these citizenship rights. These findings have been discussed at a panel meeting in the Oviedo work conference of the bEUcitizen consortium in June 2016. Contributions have been presented by the University of Trento (WP5; IT), the University of Oxford (WP6; UK), University of Oviedo (WP7; ES), and Utrecht University (WP8; NL). In addition, the Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (WP4; ES) and Utrecht University (WP3, NL) have contributed to the panel meeting. This report presents the findings of these WPs as well as the discussions during the meeting. It first presents the questions the WP9 coordinators have raised regarding gendered and generational biases in the access to the four citizenship rights to each of the representatives of WP5 to 8. Second, it summarizes the reactions to these questions. Third, the discussion at the panel meeting is presented and finally some conclusions are drawn.

## **GENDER AND GENERATIONAL ASPECTS OF CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS**

As an input for the panel meeting WP9 findings of the bEUcitizen program on gender and generations are presented to the participating WPs. The idea of the panel is that the participating WPs relate to these findings and contribute by discussing, problematizing or detailing aspects of gender and generational related issues of the various citizenship rights on basis of their own results. The introduction is summarized as follows:

Gendered and generational interdependencies form a crucial framework for understanding the scope and character of potential effects of EU citizenship. EU citizenship relates directly to the assumption of citizens as free individuals exercising individual citizenship rights. However, the institutional, legal and cultural embedding of individual citizen as family members - both horizontal (gender-relations) and vertical (intergenerational relations) - in national social, political and legal systems may form an obstacle for executing these individual rights. So far, WP9 has analyzed that gender-equality got high formal and legal priority in the EU in particular with regard to labour market participation, social security (pensions, labour protection and other work-related rights), care leaves and childcare. However, at new emerging challenges with regard to gender-equality the EU seems to be hampered in its efforts. Such new challenges concern among others (gender) equal reproductive and family rights (D9.8), high unemployment rates of mainly young women in weak welfare states, old age poverty among women, and the vulnerable position of – mainly female - migrant care workers (see D9.1/D9.6). D9.4 shows that it is the wish of many young Europeans to guaranteeing *social* rights, such as housing benefits and economic support for a dependent partner, to both heterosexual and homosexual couples. In addition, respondents agree on a larger role for the EU in guaranteeing *civil* rights, and also on the portability of *civil* rights for mobile citizens. In other words, citizens moving within the EU should be able to retain partnership and parenthood rights.

D9.5 in analyzing the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) shows that the Committee focuses on the rights and antidiscrimination perspective and on labour market access as key determinants for women's integration (in the case of migrants), women's financial independence also in old age (individual level), and EU's economic progress (on the social level). This is particularly the case in relation to the way in which the economic consequences of unequal care responsibilities and accumulated gendered disadvantages are articulated, and the way in which women's exclusion from the labour market and/or the gendered segregation of the labour market impact gaps in pay and pensions as well as the risk of poverty in old age. Specific framings related to specifically to elderly care but with implications for other fields as well (quality of services, recognition of informal work) dominate the framings in this policy area. Family-related rights are underlined to a large extent but most prominently in relation to freedom of movement and elderly care and less so in relation to migration (of third country nationals mainly). All in all, the rights-based framing is the most dominant across the policy issues and it is articulated in combination with economic perspectives but never clearly and predominantly subsumed to them.

Within the policy area of elderly care, the economic perspectives are more nuanced or varied, addressing both negative and positive aspects (such as the economic consequences of the care burden as opposed to the silver economy and the economic potential of older women on the labour market and in care roles). Structural understandings of the problems prevail to a large extent; however, policy documents remain silent on issues such as privatization of care services, care infrastructure, attribution of financial responsibility, as well as its universal or non-universal nature. Similarly, men's role as carers is only marginally addressed. Member state differences in terms of care regimes, and the level of coverage, for instance are not addressed either despite the diversified approaches towards individual and family rights and responsibilities for dependants (to be assumed by the family or the state) in this regard. Since a lot of emphasis is placed on the role of grandmothers as informal carers, the Southern European model is to a certain extent taken as the point of departure in these debates and articulations. The same can be said about differences in (women's) labour market participation and labour market models across member states, or migration system, integration policies and the differences between sender and receiver countries. Differences in welfare systems, member state resistance to EU intervention in social policies, and the challenges of portable social security rights as well as debates on welfare tourism and welfare chauvinism are also left largely untouched.

*Social, civil, political and economic rights with regard to gender and generations.*

While WP9 is directly touching upon gender and generational issues, the challenge of this 9.3 deliverable is to see in what way the work packages focusing on the four citizenship rights are also sensitive to categorical dimensions of the rights they are dealing with. In order to prepare well the panel meeting the following issues have been formulated and has been sent to the WP 5 to 8 coordinators:

So far, gender and generation related rights are hardly or only indirectly touched upon by the Work packages 5-8. Nevertheless, some deliverables focus on issues that could be put in such a perspective. These issues might inspire a panel meeting at which potential consequences of the various citizenship rights at the EU level or across member states could be discussed and framed along the lines of three of the four central tensions of bEUcitizen.

A) The tension between a worker-model/market-EU citizenship and political EU citizenship.

This tension, to be addressed by WP8, can be discussed by referring to the results of D9.5 and D9.7. The main question here is why some of the new challenges with regard to gender and intergenerational equality (quality of care, poor migrant's social protection, old age poverty and high rates of youth unemployment) are hard to get on the European agenda. Is this a matter of representation, of subsidiarity, of too sensible issues from the perspective of member states, or a matter of collateral damage of the free European market?

B) The tension between EU citizenship as an integrated status (as in national citizenship) and EU citizenship as a disaggregated form of citizenship;

This tension, to be addressed by WP5 and WP7, can build upon the deliverables 5.1 (categorization of economic rights) and 7.2 (transposing and enforcing civil rights). The main questions here might be what the implications are of the (national/occupational) protection of professional work for the entrance to the job for mobile newcomers (young professionals coming from other EU member states) and/or for mobile female professionals (D7.2). Are closure mechanisms working against these (still) newcomers on the mobile European labour market, and what does it mean for the quality of the work? As 9.6 shows, member states with high protection levels in the field of care work have hardly any migrant care workers and vice versa. Another issue is the portability of civil family and gender rights across European borders. The issue is raised in D5.1 but not yet analysed. What are the barriers to transport civil rights with regard to reproduction and marriage from the more liberal to the more traditional countries for mobile workers, and how to overcome such barriers?

C) The tension between citizenship understood as a bundle of rights and citizenship as a social practice;

This tension, to be addressed by WP6, combines the deliverables 6.1 and 6.2 with D9.2. These deliverables are complementary and the main issues regard the social family related rights of mobile workers. This concerns the rights of mobile parents/families to get access to equal social rights as citizens of the member states (housing, education, childcare, healthcare, etc.). This is a very topical issue in the light of the deal with England (Cameron) about the reduction of child allowances for mobile workers adjusted to the income level of their home country. It is also topical in the light of tension a), because the European parliament hasn't had a say in this shift in the European agreement on equal treatment of mobile EU workers. A first discussion concerns the question what social work related rights and social services are available for EU mobile workers, and what rights and services are excluded. Related to that are questions about its meaning for gender- and generational equality.

## PANEL CONTRIBUTIONS

A first contribution has been presented by the historical WP 3, by Maarten Prak (Utrecht University): WP3 focuses on older forms of citizenship and considers the implications for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In WP3 it is found that all the forms of citizenships have interesting messages for the present and this is true also for generations. In the past (before the French revolution), citizenship as a process was acquired partly through education; training and apprenticeship was an important route to citizenship. When it comes to the emancipation of women in relation to citizenship rights, social movements played a very important role. Many groups of people were excluded from citizenship and guild membership (either generally or locally) on the basis of who they were. Gender, religion, place of origin, legitimate birth, physical condition, and personal history and behaviour could all lead to varying levels of barriers or outright exclusion. A migrant's honourable behaviour might need to be certified in writing by officials from their previous residence, or testified by witnesses at their admission, as in Antwerp.<sup>1</sup> Such barriers were often strict, and where formal barriers were not applied, informal barriers could exist due to cultural or social norms. But barriers could also be flexibly applied due to local or temporal contexts, and not all background barriers existed, or were emphasized, in all areas. Gender was the most important of all barriers. Women were generally excluded from political rights, and their economic rights were generally limited either by explicit barriers, an emphasis on the male-headed household, or cultural factors. This is not to say that women did not perform a large amount of economic work, including in the incorporated trades. How this issue has been developed is an important research question for historical researchers because gender equality was not granted automatically it required struggles and the international declarations about gender equality and citizenship are very important tools for social movements (see appendix 1 for a summary of the historical findings on gender).

A second contribution was made by Andrea Bianculli (WP4, Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (*IBEI*)) arguing that the concept of free movement is mainly linked to labour purposes. For instance, in Switzerland women are disadvantaged in internal movements and also in Europe when women move away from their home country, they often tend to lose rights. Especially women with children face difficulties with regard to mobility, as it is more easy for men to travel since they do not have to care for children. The WP4 representative states that across Europe women's immobility is higher than men's immobility. It is explained that the barriers for mothers are higher if child care services are lacking. In that respect there are country differences across Europe and for example women who move from East Europe tend to have low professional profiles because they tend to work in the care sector.

Elena Ioriatti (WP5, University of Trento) contributed by stating that when citizenship is looked at from an economic perspective, the economic status (professional qualification, type of employment,

---

<sup>1</sup> De Kerf, XXX.

economic fragility) of people is an important explanatory factor when it comes to accessibility to gender and generational related rights. WP5 paid attention to consumer rights (in the online market). From a generational perspective, it can be claimed that particularly older people face difficulties in having access to information and with (online) payment. They also experience difficulties when it comes to purchasing financial products. Children and young adult show fragility also in the area of advertisement. A general conclusion is that although some EU directives point to the importance of access to consumer information, it remains very important to provide institutional support to weak consumers (such as access to online payments older people, protection of new consumers such as younger people, access to capital investment and receiving funding for women).

WP5 also has found difficulties young people (18-24 years old) experience on the housing market as there is a tendency to refuse (the buying of) houses to younger people due to the absence of a subsistent income. Discriminations could also be found in the area of sexual orientation, although there are legislative instruments against these discriminations, for example the Dutch parliament has decided in 2011 that municipalities in the Netherland can dismiss civil servants who refuse to marry same-sex couples. The Institute for Human Rights monitors discriminations of consumers and there are institutions advising the most fragile consumers. Differences between women and man have been found very often also in the price of insurance if these are based upon mortality data.

Finally, about future scenarios on gender and generational, the WP5 representative mentioned the UN 2013 report about intergenerational solidarity and justice: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2006future.pdf>

Martin Seeleib-Kaiser (WP6, Oxford University) reacts on the notes of the WP9 coordinators by accentuating that with regard to young people on the move, his main argument came down to this: Within the EU young people have to right to free movement. E.g. they have to right to move from an economically unprosperous country to a country with better employment opportunities. In theory, they should also be able to export social rights. However, in practice there is no de-commodification in the destination country, i.e. no access to social security rights, due to the structure of national social security systems. In order to apply for social security, in many cases you need to have contributed and this is not the case for young people. Actual access to social (security) rights do also not apply to new forms of employment, including those who are self-employed. So, although there is a right to free movement, many young people cannot export social rights in practice.

When it comes to generational issues, older people seem to be in a better position, because pension rights are generally more easy to export. However, older mobile people (those migrating) are likely to have a lower/weaker employment status in the destination country than in their country of origin. Consequently, their pension rights will be lower when they move. This is called "pension poverty". Although older people can move and can export their pension rights, they are still in a vulnerable position because many pension systems remain occupational-based. This has consequences for the

actual rights of older people when they move to a different country and start to work in a lower position than in their home country.

The fact that many social security systems are 'occupational' (contribution-based/earning-related) also has consequences for those working in the lower echelons of the labour market, including e.g. the care sector and the hospitality sector. Many migrants in these sector are considered as "guest workers". With regard to older migrant workers, this idea conflicts with the life course perspective, as in reality the host country often has the idea that older workers need to go 'home' when they grow old, because they do not want to pay for their social assistance when they are old. Thus with regard to social rights WP6 has found that within a life course perspective, the "guest workers" approach could be problematic especially for migrants, mostly women, working in these sectors.

Sylvia Gomez Anson (University of Oviedo, WP7) presented the topics investigated on Civil Rights and argues that it was difficult to actually include the gender and generational perspective in the analyses of civil rights due to the absence of data on these topics [sic!]. Instead the representative of WP7 portrayed a profile of the 'general' mobile citizen: young, childless, economically active, well- educated, single. These people are the ones who can benefit from EU-mobility, since they have the physical abilities, the linguistic abilities, more flexibility, easily access to new media, and they do not have care responsibilities. Actually WP7 appears not to be able to react adequately on the gender and generational civil rights issues. In compensating for that lack of knowledge some questions are raised; what happens to the children of those who move? And what happens to the parents who are left behind? Gender-related questions refer to the issues of same-sex partnerships, surrogacy, and vulnerable position of female migrant (care) workers.

Anna Gerbrandy (Utrecht University, WP8) argued that we need to make a conceptual distinction between the *granting* of rights on the one hand (everyone is formally granted to the same rights) and the *use* of rights, as there appears to be a discrepancy between the granting and actual use of rights. E.g. younger people do not use the right to vote as much as older people. She told that for example in the case of the Brexit Referendum, younger people used the right to vote less than older people while the young people are more favorable to EU.

When it comes to gender, women tend to use their right to vote differently than men do. Although the importance of the gender and generational perspective is acknowledged by WP8, it is argued that social-economic status is more important as an explanatory factor for how political rights (the right to vote) are actually used than gender and age. Usually people with higher socio-economic status use more the right to vote (Brexit is an exception). Yet, because women are overrepresented in the lower social-economic classes gender and class distinctions are intersecting in the exercise of political rights. Finally, the discrepancy between granting rights versus using rights is important because it touches upon legitimacy.



## PANEL DISCUSSION IN INTERACTION WITH THE AUDIENCE:

Sandra Seubert in reaction to WP6:

It is dangerous to focus only on the worker position in relation to rights, because of the gender division in “productive and reproductive” labour and because this results in a “naturalization” of gender division of labour. This means one cannot simply say the access to and actual use of rights is all about the position in the labour market. Martin Seeleib-Kaiser responds to this by saying that he acknowledges that the labour market is gendered and that for example migrant women in Germany where there is an easier access to childcare have a higher chance to work part-time than migrant women in UK (where there is according to him not any family policy). Yet, in conclusion he argues that when talking about the access to and use of rights, it is more important to focus on the position on the labour market than on gender.

Trudie Knijn (chair, WP9 co-coordinator):

This is debatable because Germany offers mainly part-time childcare in many Länder, while the UK (although this is reduced under the current coalition) certainly has a family policy by offering free vouchers for childcare as well as income compensation for poor families. Also, one easily forgets that given the still unequal division of private care responsibilities women enter the labour market with a heavy backpack, while men run without much ballast. Given that gender-equality in care responsibilities, it is not sufficient to look at labour market inequality only; gender co-determines one’s position at the labour market. The assumption embedded in all EU policies on mobile youth, is that youth on the move do not have any children. The EU considers youth as people aged 18-35. There is this assumption of free floating individuals who do not have any care responsibilities. After age 35 the chances of having a child decrease. Given also the Eastern and Southern EU countries’ demographic problems, the involvement of the fathers in care responsibilities is crucial.

Birte Siim in reaction to several panel members:

First a question for Martin Seeleib-Kaiser: what if you choose DK as case, and not only UK and Germany as examples? The picture change if we look at the right of childcare in DK where there are very few migrant care workers. Birte Siim totally agrees with Sandra Seubert that the relationship between citizenship and gender is also a conceptual issue, not only an empirical problem (she reminds the classical problem, long tradition of citizenship studies from a feminist perspective, Pateman, public/private divide, Nancy Fraser, etc). There are problems at the conceptual level. The main argument is that ‘intersectionality’ needs to become more important and embedded in studies on access to and use of (social) rights. One cannot, and should not, look at *either* gender, generations or class (and ethnicity): instead, these perspectives are interconnected and this intersectionality needs to be reflected both at the theoretical and conceptual and empirical levels. Birte Siim added, however, how difficult is to link intersectionality to empirical research (i.e. for quantitative studies Gender

Equality Index it is very difficult to look at the intersectionality issue and it is difficult also for qualitative studies).

Isabel Shutes pointed out that in the labour market there are very gendered sectors and women with under 5 are the most disadvantaged (see the Panel on insiders and outsiders).

Trudie Knijn reacting on Sandra Seubert told that there are tensions between the “adult worker model” which is related to the market and the EU citizenship and rights. She asks what we, by now, can conclude on gender and generational issues with respect to political rights. Anna Gerbrandy answers that gender and generations is simply not conceptualized in the formation of political rights, which are individual rights, and that because of this, it is very difficult to say something about it. Trudie Knijn responds by asking why it is so difficult to get these issues on the political agenda. In this respect Bridget Anderson argues that in the UK, women tend to be far less engaged in political activities on a national level, since political parties are still male dominated, while they are more involved than men in local politics and community initiatives. Birte Siim responds to Trudie Knijn’s question by saying that women themselves are divided: they can agree on a statement like ‘violence against women is bad’, but in general there is too much disagreement between women movements. She argues that the ‘silence’ around these disagreements needs to be addressed. She told that within the “social investment” perspective, after the economic downturn, the issue of family disappeared, while public child care services are crucial supports for increasing women’s labour market participation. Martin Seeleib-Kaiser argues in this respect that on an EU level quite some steps have taken to include ‘the family perspective’ in policies, but that the nation states lag behind.

Trudie Knijn finally asks Elena Ioriatti and Maarten Prak what can be said about the closure of occupations for newcomers. Maarten Prak answers that in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century the market for apprenticeships was very much localized. Interestingly, data show that there was nonetheless high mobility after this training period. So, the barriers for newcomers can be overcome. Elena Ioriatti says that economic rights are well-protected (and also well-conceptualized) at the EU-level and national level, but this is not the case for social rights. Differences between countries remain in measures supporting gender equality.

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The panel discussion brought to the fore some interesting findings, it emerged some intense debates, and highlighted different perspectives of bEUcitizen participants on both the conceptual relevance and the actual situation of the gendered and generational divide in citizenship status and rights at the EU level. In this part some general conclusions are drawn, to begin with the three tensions outlined by the WP9 coordinators.

- A) The tension between a worker-model/market-EU citizenship and political EU citizenship.

This tension, addressed by WP8, and further discussed by some bEUcitizen participants raises the question why some of the new challenges with regard to gender and intergenerational equality (quality of care, poor migrant's social protection, old age poverty and high rates of youth unemployment) are hard to get on the European agenda. Is this a matter of representation, of subsidiarity, of too sensible issues from the perspective of member states, or a matter of collateral damage of the free European market?

A first conclusion is that this partly is due to representation due to the lower participation of young people in elections, and of lower-class women. The democratic deficit appears mainly at the EU and national level, less so on the local level where women are more actively participating than men. This can partly be explained by the still -older - male dominated political parties in most EU member states, occasioning a lack of identification with political representatives among young people and women. It also results in a male dominated political agenda. Secondly, at the EU level itself it appears that consensus among women MPs can only be reached on either a very abstract and general level of agreement or on very obvious human rights issues, such as violence against women. On a more direct and tangible level, such as care policies, family reunion or minimum wage for young adolescents, women disagree as much as men do, and confess to their political domination.

B) The tension between EU citizenship as an integrated status (as in national citizenship) and EU citizenship as a disaggregated form of citizenship.

This tension, addressed by WP5 and WP7, raises the questions what the implications are of the (national/occupational) protection of professional work for the entrance to the job for mobile newcomers (young professionals coming from other EU member states) and/or for mobile female professionals. Are closure mechanisms working against these (still) newcomers on the mobile European labour market, and what does it mean for the quality of the work? Member states with high protection levels in the field of care work have hardly any migrant care workers and vice versa. Another issue is the portability of civil family and gender rights across European borders. What are the barriers to transport civil rights with regard to reproduction and marriage from the more liberal to the more traditional countries for mobile workers, and how to overcome such barriers?

From an historical perspective it can be concluded that although in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century the market for apprenticeships was very much localized data show that there was nonetheless high mobility after this training period. So, the barriers for newcomers can be overcome. Citizenship as a process was acquired partly through education; training and apprenticeship was an important route to citizenship. Today, closure mechanisms are still in place and protect for instance national care workers against an influx of migrant care workers in Denmark and the Netherlands while in other countries (Spain, Italy, Ireland, Austria) such is not the case. Paradoxically, migrant care workers are less present in the most protective countries, but if they are present they are well-protected on basis of regular workers' social rights. In general, economic (workers') rights are well-protected (and also well-conceptualized) at the EU-level and national level, but this is not the case for social rights. Differences between countries

remain in measures supporting gender equality. An overall conclusion of the panel meeting is that the EU mainly functions to protect -mobile – workers’ rights, and leaves all-inclusive citizens’ rights (social rights such as education, health, welfare benefits and access to employment as well as civil rights like same-sex marriage, reproduction and adoption) to the jurisdiction of the member states. In that sense the phrase ‘EU citizen’ is probably an exaggeration of what the EU actually is governing; workers, not citizens. This has major implications for those national citizens who do not participate to the full on the national as well as EU labour market with gender- and generational inequality as a result. A new emerging conceptual as well as empirical approach of the intersectionality of class, gender, generations and ethnicity is proclaimed in several WP9 and WP10 deliverables, which is recommended for future research on the effects of the divide between workers’ and citizens’ rights at the EU level.

C) The tension between citizenship understood as a bundle of rights and citizenship as a social practice.

This tension, a follow up to tension B) addressed by WP6, combines the deliverables 6.1 and 6.2 with D9.2. These deliverables are complementary and the main issues regard the social family related rights of mobile workers. This concerns the rights of mobile parents/families to get access to equal social rights as citizens of the member states (housing, education, childcare, healthcare, etc.). This is a very topical issue in the light of the deal with England (Cameron) about the reduction of child allowances for mobile workers adjusted to the income level of their home country. It is also topical in the light of tension A), because the European parliament hasn’t had a say in this shift in the European agreement on equal treatment of mobile EU workers. A first discussion concerns the question what social work related rights and social services are available for EU mobile workers, and what rights and services are excluded. Related to that are questions about its meaning for gender- and generational equality.

At the panel meeting a conclusion was that on the one hand women’s mobility is hampered by the lack of similar provisions for childcare, elderly care and care leave between – but also within – member states. [Note of the authors: Some studies about international migration i.e. Kofman & Raghuram 2015, showed that women’s immobility, especially in case of children or elderly left behind, can support (skilled) men’s mobility, which is true also for intra-EU migration and for skilled migration.] In addition, the EU in its mobility policy assumes that young adults – up to the age of 35 (sic!) – are free floating without family obligations; the youth mobility programs lack sensitiveness to the needs of young parents, women and men alike, to combine education or work with caring for young children. On the other hand, the EU has taken the initiative to stimulate member states to develop care related policies, with an eye on the improvement of women’s employment. Because this policy is submitted to the subsidiarity principle, and so far, can only be implemented via ‘soft law’- the Open Method of Coordination - member states too easily neglect such initiatives or implement it according to their own marginal policy agenda. In general, work-related social rights itself are well-defined, but the actual use of these rights is partly blocked because the still gendered citizenship position of women in care, and young adults as newcomers on the labour market.