

Frank Vandenbroucke, A European Social Union: luxury or necessity? In: Philippe Beke (ed.), *Een momentopname in veranderende wereldbeelden. Paul Rietjens, veertig jaar actief in de wandelgangen van buitenlandse zaken*, 2019, VUBPRESS Brussel, pp. 61-82.

Abstract:

Sixty years ago, European integration was premised on a neat division of labour: important aspects of economic policy would become supranational, social policy could be safely left in national hands. In today's EU, this division of labour is no longer sustainable: one reason is monetary unification, another reason is the economic heterogeneity after enlargement. Revising that division of labour requires a political contract at the European level that sustains risk-sharing and common social objectives. Therefore, we need a coherent conception of a 'European Social Union'.

In this contribution, I challenge the idea that the enlarged EU has been caught in a 'tragic dilemma' where progress for some inevitably comes at the price of decline for others. I zoom in on two specific challenges: first, the social dimension that is needed to complete EMU, and the puzzle of sovereignty and solidarity that has to be solved; second, the justification of the principles of free movement and non-discrimination and the objective of 'fair mobility'. On that backdrop, I explain how I understand the notion of a 'European Social Union', and I briefly reflect on the legacy of the Juncker Commission.

Keywords: European Union, European Monetary Union, European Social Union, fair mobility, free movement, European social policy