

26-27 March
University of Milan
Department of Social and Political Sciences

SPS Seminar Room (Passione)
Via Passione 15 - Milan

Between Scylla and Charybdis

**European Social Policy Navigating the
Anti-Globalist Sea**



**UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI
DI MILANO**

DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE
SOCIALI E POLITICHE



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**UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA**



DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE POLITICHE,
GIURIDICHE E STUDI INTERNAZIONALI

Between Scylla and Charybdis: European Social Policy Navigating the Anti-Globalist Sea

After years of crisis, the European Union appeared to embrace a renewed social turn, moving beyond austerity, strengthening social rights and expanding interventionist governance tools. Yet this trajectory now unfolds in a far more hostile environment marked by war, geopolitical fragmentation, and the rise of anti-globalist forces. Is the EU's social turn reaching its limits?

This workshop examines the future of European social policy from three complementary angles. The first panel situates current developments within the broader political economy of European integration, analysing shifts in market interventionism, eco-social transformation, and crisis-driven polity formation. The second panel explores key social and labour market initiatives, ranging from labour rights and digital regulation to food aid and the evolution of the EU's social architecture. The third panel investigates domestic politics and implementation, focusing on labour market dualisation, platform work regulation, human capital strategies, and the related discourse of populist governments.

A concluding roundtable assesses the pros and cons of the EU's social agenda under the second von der Leyen Commission and whether European social policy can navigate between the anti-globalist backlash and popular dissensus without losing direction.

Agenda

DAY 1 | 26th of March

14.00 - 14.15 Welcome and introduction

Igor Guardiancich (University of Padua) and Marcello Natili (University of Milan)

14.15 - 16.30 The political economy of EU integration in crises

Chair: Anna Kyriazi (University of Milan)

Book Presentation: 'Critical Political Economy of the European Polycrisis' (Edward Elgar: 2025) - Vincenzo Maccarone (Scuola Normale Superiore)

Papers presentation:

a) The New Politics of Market Interventionism: Lessons from Europe Transformational Turn - Donato di Carlo, Kathleen McNamara and Manuela Moschella

b) The Rise and Fall of a Policy Paradigm? Understanding EU Eco-Social policy change - Ekaterina Domorenok and Paolo Graziano

c) EU political structuring during the 'social turn' - Maurizio Ferrera, Beatrice Carella and Davide Caprioglio

17 - 19.00 The social and labour market policies of the European Union

Chair: Marcello Natili (University of Milan)

Book presentation: The Politics of European Food Aid Policy from Delors to von der Leyen (Palgrave Macmillan, 2025) - Ilaria Madama (University of Milan)

Papers presentation:

a) Reinforcing labour rights through the public purse: A power-resources perspective on the EU's public procurement review - Sven Schreurs

b) The social dimension of the EU digital agenda: advancing or weakening social rights? - Beatrice Carella

c) European eco-social policies in times of populist governments - Benedetta Cotta

DAY 2 | 27th March

9.30 - 11.30 Social and labour market politics in the European Union

Chair: Igor Guardiancich (University of Padua)

Book presentation: Human Capital for the Knowledge Economy: Upskill Journeys in Advanced Capitalist Democracies (Oxford University Press, 2025) - Niccolò Durazzi (University of Modena & Reggio Emilia)

Papers presentation:

a) The Electoral Payoff of Labour Market Dualization: Social Democracy, Insiders, Outsiders and Labour Market Reforms in Five European Countries - Michele Piccinetti

b) Claiming Credit or Shifting Blame? The usage of the EU in national parliamentary debates on welfare reforms - Joshua Cova, Ilaria Madama, Emmanuele Pavolini

c) The Politics of Platform Work Regulation: Coalition Dynamics, Power Resources and Policy Outcomes in Italy and Spain - Paolo Funari

12.00 - 13.00 Concluding Roundtable: The end of the social turn?

Chair: Ilaria Madama (University of Milan)

Speakers: Francesco Corti (Member of cabinet of the EU Commission Executive Vice President Roxana Mînzatu) and Lorenzo Repetti (European Trade Union Confederation).

List of external participants:

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