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French family policy: long tradition and diversified measures

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Abstract

In France, the intervention of the state in the private sphere has long been accepted as legitimate. The current French family policy is the result of a compromise between the objectives of raising fertility, providing income support to families and promoting the work-family balance. Thus it includes a wide range of measures based on a variety of ideological standpoints. It combines measures encouraging women's employment with others in favour of large families. Recently, employers have been encouraged to implement family-friendly policies of their own. Since the state family policy is already quite comprehensive, their participation is rather low. This long-term 'mix of tools' is likely to be a factor behind the current high fertility in France, but the number and the complexity of family policy measures make it very difficult to quantify their overall effect on fertility.

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