**EUCAnet MEDIA TIP**

**Social policy coordination in Canada: learning from the EU**

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In the academic world, contributors who venture a comparison between Canada and the European Union (EU) sometimes draw raised eyebrows and sceptical glances. Some scholars, however, note that in contrast to the tight federalism and strong national government that characterise the US model, the Canadian model is much less centralised, most of its powers devolving upon the provinces rather than the federal government – which in many ways mirrors the EU model. Such a comparison is particularly fruitful for a discussion of social policy, an area in which Canadian provinces may be able to learn from the EU’s Open Method of Coordination (OMC), a tool of soft-law governance that promotes goal-setting and mutual learning between Member States.

Bart Vanhercke from the OSE in Brussels spent a week in Canada in the spring of 2014, bringing these EU ideas to Canadian audiences in Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal as part of a series of six workshops held across Canada organized by Amy Verdun and Donna Wood from the University of Victoria. Since then, Bart has worked with Madeleine Read to further develop the Canada-EU comparison through a paper that (a) explores the reasons that people should consider the parallels between Canada and the European Union, (b) describes the instruments of the Open Method of Coordination and what lessons Canada might be able to draw from them, (c) highlights how the OMC might open a window of opportunity for discussions of the social development of Europe and (d) suggests a number of incremental steps that could be taken to encourage policy learning between the provinces and the federal government in Canada.

The full paper by Bart Vanhercke and Madeleine Read can be accessed at <https://labs.carleton.ca/canadaeurope/2015/policy-paper-social-policy-coordination-in-canada-learning-from-the-eu-by-bart-vanhercke/>.

Information on all six Canada-EU workshops, including a synthesis report written by Donna Wood and Amy Verdun and can be accessed at <https://labs.carleton.ca/canadaeurope/2015/policy-paper-social-policy-coordination-in-canada-learning-from-the-eu-by-bart-vanhercke/>.

Bart Vanhercke is Director of the European Social Observatory (OSE) in Brussels, Belgium, and Associate Professor at the Institute for European Studies of the Saint-Louis University (FUSL). His current research and publications focus on the social dimension of the new European economic governance, a topic on which he also works as associate academic staff at the Centre for Sociological Research (CESO) at the University of Leuven. Madeleine Read is his research assistant, affiliated with Brigham Young University (BYU).

Amy Verdun is Jean Monnet Chair Ad Personam, Professor of Political Science in the Department at the University of Victoria (UVic) in Canada, of which she was the Chair from 2010 – June 2013. She is author or editor of seventeen books and co-editor of the *Journal of Common Market Studies*, one of the leading international journals on European integration. With Donna Wood, she co-edited a special issue of Canadian Public Administration (June 2013, Volume 56, No. 2) comparing Canadian and European Union approaches to social policy governance.

Donna E. Wood is an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Victoria. She has published on federalism and labour market policy in Canada, the United Kingdom and the European Union. She is currently writing a book comparing how Canadian provinces govern the public employment service following the devolution of this responsibility from the federal government.