

Beyond the social dimension

A study of policy focus of the European Commission from 1995-2010

Bachelor's thesis European Studies

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Summary

This bachelor's thesis will examine the policies of the European Commission in the period from 1995 until 2010 in order to determine whether or not there has been a shift in the amount of attention the European Commission paid to social policy as well as economic policy. The main research question will be: *To what extent has the focus of the European Commission changed between 1995 and 2010 with regards to social policy and with regards to economic policy?*

The Commission will be subject of this study, because the Commission is the main agenda-setter of the EU and therefore is the principle actor that can influence the policies on this subject. Two document types, White Papers and Work Programmes, are selected to determine the level of policy focus for social policy and for economic policy using terms derived from the Treaties as indicators for both policy fields. The White Papers and Work Programmes are chosen because they show what the Commission will be focussing on during a year (in the case of Work Programmes) and which topics the Commission is actually working on (in the case of White Papers).

To find out whether or not changes in both policy fields have indeed occurred, the Work Programmes and White Papers will be analysed using a critical discourse analysis approach, supplemented with computerised content analysis. This combination of methods will lead to a quantitative analysis as well as a qualitative analysis of the developments in policy focus of the Commission in the fields of social and economic policy.

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1. Introduction

In this bachelor's thesis, the question whether or not changes in policy focus of the European Commission have occurred in the social and economic policy fields. It should be made clear at the start of this thesis that the amount attention for these two areas is not considered to be relative to each other, or in other words: it is not assumed that an increase in attention for one policy field automatically leads to a decrease in the other. The level of attention for a certain policy field is considered to be independent from the amount of attention for other policy areas. The choice for the social and economic policy fields will now be explained.

Social policy within the European Union had long been a subject that was deemed to be handled at the national level. This changed in the 1990s after the signings of the Amsterdam and Maastricht Treaties. These treaties gave the EU more competences to act on topics within the area of social policy, although the principle of subsidiarity still exists. The EU mainly influences social policy through the use of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC). The OMC consists of several instruments that can be used in order to help Member States to coordinate their policies. These instruments include: "guidelines, benchmark and sharing of best practices, multi-lateral surveillance, indicators, iterative process, implementation through domestic policy and legislation" (Radaelli, 2003). It might seem that this is still a relatively weak instrument for the EU to influence social policy, however besides the OMC the European Commission has also gained the right of initiative on many subjects in the field of social policy, giving much more power to the EU to create new legislation for social policy (European Union, 2006).

After this surge in activity in the field of social policy in the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, observers have recently claimed a shift in focus of the European Union. Wanlin, for example, writes that "economics is a key ingredient of the EU's current political malaise" and continues to sum up the challenges facing the EU in 2006: "*labour markets are overly rigid, the single market remains unfinished, education is far from world class, unemployment is high and businesses are not innovative enough*" (Wanlin, 2006). Most of these challenges are economic ones. In 2009, Tilford and Whyte wrote: "*Faced with the worst economic crisis*

since the 1930s, policy-makers are pushing through heterodox measures in a desperate bid to prop up ailing banks and stave off the threat of a full-blown economic depression. Banks are being recapitalised – and even nationalised.” This quote can be taken as a description of the state of the EU and its Member States at the time, showing that many actors were focussing on economic policy (Tilford & Whyte, 2009). Especially, but not exclusively one should note (and as can be seen in the publication of Wanlin in 2006), since the first of many economic crises in 2008, many believe that the EU has been concentrating more and more on economic policy and that social policy has been mostly put on hold. However, even when there are articles in newspapers and on the internet everyday about the economic crises, Greece going bankrupt, and the possible disappearing of the Euro, this still does not mean that this is really the only subject currently discussed and handled by the EU, there could well be other policy fields that get much attention, but attention for them might be very low. This will be the main question in this bachelor’s thesis. Because the scope of a bachelor thesis is rather limited, the main research question will focus on the actor that currently has the right of initiative in the field of social policy, the European Commission:

To what extent has the focus of the European Commission changed between 1995 and 2010 with regards to social policy and with regards to economic policy?

This question will be answered by looking at the policy focus of the Commission. This focus will be determined by analysing the Work Programmes of the Commissions from 1995 until (and including) 2010; furthermore all White Papers from the Commission published from 1995 until (and including) 2010 will be included in the analysis

2. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the theoretical framework that will be used as the foundation of this thesis will be clarified. More concrete: the reason why it is assumed that changes have occurred will be discussed, followed by the explanation of the choice for the Commission is actor that will be examined. This chapter will start with a short historical overview of social policy in the European Union, followed by theory on how and why the policy focus of the EU changes. Finally it will be explained why the Commission has been chosen as the main actor that will be analysed in this thesis, using agenda-setting theory to show that the Commission is the most important actor in this field.

2.1 History of social policy in the European Union

From the very start of the European Union, or its predecessors, most attention has been paid to the economic union, most notably to the free movement of goods, capital, services and labour. For a long time, no real attempts at creating a European social policy (or a European Social Model (ESM) as it is sometimes called) had been made, except for some programmes that were directed to limit poverty. This lack of social policy, which was mainly caused by refusal of the United Kingdom to participate in European social policies, lasted until the Treaty of Maastricht. The turnaround came when a Labour government took office in the UK in 1997¹, and was not caused by changes on the EU level. Even though the UK still blocked a separate chapter devoted to social policy, this treaty still gave options to move forward in the field of social policy, through a 'Protocol on Social Policy' (O'Connor, 2005, p. 347).

The European Commission can be considered to have been a front-runner when it comes to social policy: it published a White Paper on the connection between the economic and social goals of the Community in 1994, the White Paper on Social Policy (O'Connor, 2005, p. 349). This shows that at that time the Commission was more interested in moving forward with the social dimension than the Council. There was, however, one problem for the Commission: the Council had the formal power to act.

¹ It should be noted that this was part of a bigger shift towards more leftist governments occurring in most Member States, not just the UK (van Gerven, 2008, pp. 20-25)

With the Treaty of Amsterdam, in 1997, the Agreement on social policy became part of the main part of the Treaty. The agreement included the establishment of 'high level employment' as one of the EU's specific objectives, together with mainstreaming of gender equality, 'sustainable and non-inflationary growth, and convergence of economic performance including competitiveness' (O'Connor, 2005, p. 348).

At the end of the 1990s, social policy got more and more attention: at the Lisbon Council (2000), Member States agreed to developing national plans to 'tackle poverty and social exclusion' and inclusion of these plans into the already existing national social policies. These agreements were further elaborated during the Nice Council (2000), where Member States also agreed on using regular monitoring and peer review in order to ensure compliance with the agreements. The Nice Council also created agreement on the European Social Policy Agenda, an initiative that essentially mirrored the White Paper the Commission wrote six years earlier, showing that the Council had finally caught up with the ambitions of the Commission (O'Connor, 2005, p. 349).

All this activity caused a situation in which several different processes of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) were being used at the same time. After a streamlining of this approach of these different processes, which happened in 2006 (Marlier, 2007, pp. 39-41; O'Connor, 2005, p. 40), it seems that activity in social policy have died down, causing the feeling many observers (Tilford & Whyte, 2009; Wanlin, 2006) have that social policy has been put on hold in favour of other policies. This feeling could be caused by the massive amount of attention (mainstream) media are paying to the economic crisis and its aftermath since 2008. It can also be seen in publications like the Lisbon Scorecards by the Centre for European Reform. These are yearly publications that tend to test how far the EU has come in following up on the Lisbon goals. Where the Lisbon Scorecard of 2006 devotes attention to the way in which the European Union should pay attention to reform of social security systems, the Lisbon Scorecard from 2009 only briefly mentions education as an important goal, while giving a lot of attention to the economy and economic reforms (Tilford & Whyte, 2009; Wanlin, 2006). When looking at the more mainstream media, a glance at the website of EU observer shows that in recent times most articles published are about the resolution of the current economic crisis in Greece, with little other subjects (EUobserver, 2011).

2.2 Theories on (changing) policy focus in the European Union

Why the European Union is also focussing on social policies and is allowed to do so by its Member States can be explained by the concept of 'spillover'.

Spillover

Originally a term used in neofunctionalist theory, spillover is used to describe the process in which activities in one policy area creates pressure or opportunities in other policy areas for further action (Rosamond, 2000, p. 60). For example, when the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was founded in 1951 in order to integrate the national industries in these fields, it became clear that full integration would not be possible without integration in other fields, such as the field of transportation of resources and materials. Of course this process does not take place automatically, in the case of the ECSC political action was still necessary in order to actually accomplish something, but spillovers can be seen as the main catalyst for those political actions (Rosamond, 2000, pp. 59-60).

When connecting the concept of spillovers to the social policy field in Europe, it can be concluded that a lot of activity that has taken place in this policy area can be (partially) credited to spillover effects. In the early years of the European Union, social policy was mainly focussing on assisting the goals stated in the Treaties. This meant that it was aimed at facilitating the free movement of workers, and Member States made sure that the Commission did not try to broaden the scope of these policies (Falkner, 1998, p. 63). In the 1970s, however, a wider definition of social policy was adopted by the European Council, showing that the Member States acknowledged that spillovers from their economic endeavours into social policy areas were unavoidable (Falkner, 1998, p. 64).

The Single European Act (SEA) of 1987 brought with it significant opportunities for spillovers. Meant to create 'an area without internal frontiers in which the free movement of goods, persons and capital is secured', the SEA created many possibilities for spillovers connected to these goals, and the inclusion of a 'social dimension' within the SEA demonstrates that this was already expected by the signatories (Rosamond, 2000, p. 99).

Concluding, it can be said that spillovers have played a very important role in the development of the EU's social policy (Falkner, 1998, p. 197). Furthermore, spillovers can be useful to explain why the EU starts to pay attention to a certain policy field after a new Treaty is signed. An example of this is the founding of the ECSC, which was so successful that it created pressure for integration in other sectors (McCormick, 2005, p. 16) . There have been a number of Treaties since 1995 that could have had the same effects: the Treaties of Amsterdam, Nice and Lisbon.

How, then, does the concept of spillover relate to the subject of this thesis, changes in attention for social and economic policy? In the case of change in focus on social policy, this means that it would be expected that after the SEA, for example, more attention would have been paid to social policy, because the SEA caused problems in that area. Of course, again, the timing would have been right, because there was a political change taking place at the time in which most Member States got leftist governments (van Gerven, 2008, pp. 19-20). Besides the possible changes caused by timing, the spillovers caused by the SEA could mean that the Treaty of Amsterdam, and later the Treaty of Lisbon, would both have the same kind of effects, leading to more or less attention for social policy because of actions in other policy areas.

2.3 Theories on agenda-setting in the European Union

A useful approach towards agenda-setting in the European Union can be found in an article by Pollack on exactly this subject. In this article, Pollack explains the principal agent theory and shows how it relates to the EU. This theory explains how a primary actor “creates and delegates powers to their agents” (Pollack, 1999). In the case of the EU, this means that the Member States are the principal actors that create powers for and delegate to EU institutions (Commission, Court of Justice, etc.). The principal-agent model has four types of power that can be delegated to the agents: monitoring compliance, “solve problems of ‘incomplete contracting’ (meaning that an agent fills in the details of the contract, or a treaty in the case of the EU), delegate the authority to create legislation that, due to its nature, should be created by an independent regulator, and finally the power of formal agenda setting (Pollack, 1999).

When delegating, the principal actor can include certain control mechanisms that will enable it to limit the scope of the agent and to prevent attempts to broaden its mandate. This can be done by defining administrative instruments the agent is limited to, or by creating oversight procedures that are applied to monitor agent behaviour after it has occurred. There are two problems with these tools: monitoring can be very expensive for both principal and agent, and sanctions towards the agent can be hard to be put in place since (in the case of the EU) the principals have to agree to the sanctions.

Pollack then goes on to discuss agenda setting by supranational actors, both formal and informal agenda settings. Formal agenda setting power in the EU has mainly been delegated to the Commission, by giving it the sole right of initiative. The eventual influence also depends on the decision making procedure, where qualified majority voting (QMV) leads to the largest influence of the Commission.

Informal agenda setting in the EU can be done by any actor involved: member states, Commission, etcetera. The ability of an actor to be successful depends on the availability of information, unclear preferences, and an asymmetrical distribution of information.

Applying the principal-agent theory to the Commission's power after the Amsterdam Treaty shows that the agenda-setting power of the Commission was kept in place and maybe even has been enlarged, but it depends heavily on the sensitivity of the issue-area and the way the new instruments are implemented.

This principle-agent approach as outlined by Pollack seems to be the most useful theoretical approach that can be used in order to study whether or not the focus of the European Union has shifted towards a more economic approach for several reasons. First of all, it clearly explains what the main actor with agenda-setting power is in the European Union: the Commission. Nowadays the Commission has the right of initiative on most policy subjects that are related to social policy, a position that gives the Commission the formal-agenda setting power. This theory explains why it would be the most useful thing to examine the focus of the Commission: since the Commission has the right of initiative, it has the formal agenda-setting power, which leads to the logical conclusion that when the Commission is not interested in social policy, it will not be putting those subjects on the

policy agenda. So when the study is to see whether or not the focus of the European Union has shifted away from social policy, studying the focus of the Commission and whether or not that has changed over the years would be the best starting point to find any evidence.

2.4 Research questions and hypotheses

As stated in the introduction of this thesis the main research question is: *to what extent has the focus of the European Commissions changed between 1995 and 2010 with regards to social policy and with regards to economic policy?* The main hypothesis about this question will be:

After some years of pro-social agendas, the general focus of the Commission has decreased after the Nice Council (2000) with regards to social policy and increased with regards to economic policy

Based on the theoretical approach set out earlier in this chapter two sub-questions will be used in order to answer the main research question:

How did the policy focus on social policy and the policy focus on economic policy of the European Commission change in the period 1995-2010?

To what extent can a change in policy focus of the Commission be observed after events like the Nice and Lisbon Council meetings, the streamlining of the Open Method of Coordination and the economic crisis regarding social policy and economic policy?

The first sub-question is of importance because it sets the stage for the rest of the analysis. Without knowing what the starting point is, it is very difficult to assess whether or not a change has occurred. The second question of course addresses the question of whether or not the expected change can indeed be observed occurring after the events (Council meetings, Commission changes) that are expected to have such an effect, based under the previously discussed theories.

3. Methodology

Since the research will study the focus of the European Commission with regards to social policy, it will be based on examining policy documents of the Commission from which its focus can be inferred. A good example of a document that would be very useful is the 'State of the Union 2011', a speech that Commission President Barroso held in front of the European Parliament to outline the focus of the Commission for the coming year (Barroso, 2010). This is, however, a very recent initiative taken by the current Commission, which unfortunately makes it not useful for the goal of this study, so other documents have to be chosen.

The documents that will be selected for analysing will be the Work Programmes of the Commission from 1995 until 2010. Next to that, White Papers published by the Commission during this same time period will be analysed. The choice for these two types of documents is based on a couple of reasons. White Papers are chosen because they describe actions that the Commissions wants to take in a certain policy area (European Commission, 2011). The Work Programmes are chosen because they show what subjects and policy fields the Commission wants to focus on during the year of that Work Programme. . This means that it not only shows attention for one policy area like White Papers do, but they also allow for studying the relative 'weight' of a policy area in the overall policy vision of the Commission. For this reason, the Work Programmes are very useful in the content analysis, since that method calculates the percentage that indicators take up of a whole text, which can be used to show a measurable change in focus.

The documents that are selected for analysis are the Work Programmes of the Commission from 1995 until 2010. Next to these, all White Papers published by the Commission during that same period will be included. The choice for these two types of documents is based on a couple of reasons. White Papers are chosen because they describe actions that the Commission wants to take in a certain policy area (European Commission, 2011). The Work Programmes are chosen because they show what subjects and policy fields the Commissions wants to focus on during the year of that Work Programme. This means that it not only shows attention for one policy area like White Papers do, but they also allow

for studying the relative ‘weight’ of a policy area in the overall policy vision of the Commission.

In order to analyse these documents, the method of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) will be used first. CDA exists of three phases in which policy documents are analysed (as defined by Janks):

- Text analysis (description)
- Processing analysis (interpretation)
- Social analysis (explanation) (*note that the usage of the term ‘social’ has nothing to do with social policy, this will be explained later on*) (Janks, 2005)

The first phase of description means that the policy documents of the Commission will be purely analysed on the basis of the words that are used. By doing so, a first indication can be given about whether or not there has been a shift away from social policy and more towards economic policy. In this phase, all documents will be scanned for the use of words and terms that are either associated with social policy or with economic policy. The terms that will be used to analyse the attention being paid to the social policy field will be derived from the Social Chapter of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. This chapter states exactly which subjects are parts of the area that the EU is allowed to act in. The terms that will be used in the analysis are derived from Article 153 TFEU for social policy focus and articles 119 – 144 of the TFEU for economic policy focus. The exact terms used as indicators for social and economic policy focus can be found in table 1.

Table 1: Indicators for policy focus (used in discourse analysis)

Indicators for social policy	Indicators for economic policy
Working conditions	Price stability
Social protection (of workers)	(Sustainable) balance of payments
(Modernisation of) social protection systems	Movement of capital
Social exclusion/inclusion	Monetary policy
Social security	Credit facility
Information and consultation of workers	(Sound) public finances
Integration of persons excluded from the labour marker	(Government) deficits
Equality between men and women (with regard to labour market opportunities and treatment at work)	Freedom of payments
	Exchange rates

In the first phase of the research, all policy documents will be scanned for the use of these terms, which can already give an indication of a possible shift in focus. In the second phase of the discourse analysis, the texts will be interpreted. This means that the text will be viewed in the terms that it is written, unlike the superficial analysis in the first phase. By doing this, it will become clear what is exactly meant by the terms that have been counted in the first phase of analysis. The third part of CDA, (social) explanation, might not be very useful for this particular research: this is usually meant to describe the choices the original author (the Commission, in this case) made when the texts were written. Usually this phase is used to see if the use of certain words or terms has been culturally or socially defined, for example (Kettle, 2005), but that is a matter that is not necessarily useful to the research question of this study. To answer the research question, it is not necessary to know why the Commission wrote something, it is enough to know what was written and in what context it was written.

A quantitative indication will be gotten from the first phase of the discourse analysis: by doing t-tests on the numbers of found indicators between following years (for example between 1995 and 1996, 1996 and 1997) and for the different Commissions that have been in office from 1995 until 2010, the results will be tested to see if a significant change has occurred over the years or between different Commissions. The commonly used α (significance level) of 0,05, or 5%, will be used. This means that the results are accepted as statistically significant when the P-value resulting from the t-test is lower than 0,05 (De Veaux, Velleman, & Bock, 2008, p. 508), and that the results are considered to be not significant whenever the resulting P-values are higher than the α . In general, 'statistically significant' means that the data found in a study supports the rejection of the 0-hypothesis, or, in other words, that the results show that a change in the 'default' situation has occurred that falls outside the 'normal' deviations that can be expected (De Veaux, et al., 2008, p. 508). In terms of this study, statistically significant will mean that the results found in the quantitative analyses show that a change in policy focus on social policy or economic policy that cannot be attributed to 'normal fluctuation' has indeed occurred in a certain year.

The second part of the CDA will also be an important part of the study, since in that phase the actual texts will be examined to see what the Commission exactly has meant. The

eventual outcomes of the second phase critical discourse analysis can eventually be analysed by means of qualitative data analysis as Babbie describes (2004, pp. 370-382). This means that all found data has to be coded in order to be able to analyse whether or not there has been a shift in focus. In order to do so, all variables that are either related to economic or social policy that are found in the text in the second interpretative phase of the discourse analysis should be coded into one or the other, in order to be able to see if social policy or economic policy is really the dominant object of the focus of the Commission.

The quantitative (first) phase of CDA will be complemented with a content analysis approach using computerised coding and analysing with the Yoshikoder software. The terms used in this content analysis are derived from the indicators that can be found in table 1, but because of the limitations of the analysis software these terms have to be restricted to single words or terms. This limitation might be a problem for the usefulness of this study, since the original indicators for both policy fields are phrases instead of single words. This possible problem is, however, of limited effect, which is caused by the fact that Yoshikoder calculates its results in terms of proportions of the total texts. In other words, it calculates the proportion of one word of the total number of words in a text. This is actually a very useful feature, since this makes sure that the length of a text does not have an influence on the results of the study. For example, it is logical to expect a text that has 10.000 words to have more indicators that will be found than a text with 1.000 words (Lowe, 2006, p. 3). By calculating the proportions, this effect is practically taken away. The expectation is that these proportions will be (very) small, since about half of all words are “contentless grammatical function words” ((Lowe, 2006, p. 3)

One should note, however, that this method of content analysis also has its problems, the main problem being overestimation. This problem occurs when indicators are counted while they are used in a completely different context than the one it is supposed to be an indicator for (Pauwels, 2011, pp. 114-115). In problematic situations, therefore, the indicators that can have this problem will be reviewed in the context that they are found. Whenever both quantitative methods show results leading to the same conclusion (significant change or not) this will not be necessary. When there is a difference in outcome (one method shows a significant change, where the other does not) it will be necessary to

look at the contexts of the indicators found in the content analysis ² in order to determine if this difference is caused by the problem of overestimation.

The words to be used in the content analysis can be found in table 2 on the next page. Certain words and terms can be encountered in some variations (for example singular and plural tense). In order to make sure that all variations are counted, the words where this is applicable and expected to have an influence are entered with a *.

Table 2: Indicators for policy focus (used in content analysis)

Terms for social policy	Terms for economic policy
Conditions	Capital
Equality	Credit
Exclusion	Deficit*
Inclusion	Exchange
Pension*	Finance*
Protection	Monetary
Workers	Payment*
	Price*

The Yoshikoder software will be used to report risk ratios for differences between all consecutive years (so again, 1995 will be compared to 1996, 1996 to 1997, etc.) and between the different Commissions. A risk ratio is the “ratio of the probability of seeing” an indicator for social or economic policy in a given document and the same probability in a different document (Lowe, 2006, p. 3). This means that the software will compare the chance of encountering indicators of social policy, for example, in the documents from one year or Commission to the chance of encountering it in the documents for the following year or Commission. If the risk ratio is larger than 1, this would mean that there is a 100% more terms indicating social policy, and inversely, when the outcome is smaller than 1 there would be a 100% decrease in those terms. These results are to be statistically significant when the confidence interval, which is also calculated by the software, excludes 1 (Lowe, 2006).

Finally, in order to see whether there is a correlation between the results from the discourse analysis and the result from the content analysis, the correlation coefficients for these results will be calculated. In general, when such a coefficient is -1 or 1 it means that

² Since the context is already taken into consideration in the discourse analysis, it will not be necessary to review the results from the discourse analysis: all terms that are used in other contexts than those of social policy and economic policy are already discarded.

the two results are very strongly associated and there is no association between the results when the coefficient would be 0. When resulting correlation coefficients in this study are 0 or negative, that would be a problem. A result of 0 would mean that there is absolutely no relationship, in other words: the two methods might be measuring completely different things. A negative coefficient would mean, for example, that whenever one result shows an increase where the other result shows a decrease for a certain policy field (De Veaux, et al., 2008, p. 171). In order to determine whether or not the correlation between both methods is significant (in other words: to see if they measure the same things) the P-values of these coefficients will be calculated. When these P-values are lower than 0,05 (the alpha level), then the correlation is expected to be significant, so both methods should measure the same things (Moore & McGabe, 2002, p. 580).

Another way of describing the strength of correlation can be found in the work of Cohen (1988), who describes a general way of defining correlation strengths for social sciences. Cohen describes a correlation of 0,1 to be weak, which for this study would mean that both quantitative methods do not measure the same events and indicators. When the correlation is 0,3, Cohen states that there is a medium strength relation, which would mean that both methods do measure the same subject, but there are some differences in the results. For social sciences in general, however, this would mean that both methods do indeed measure the same subjects. Finally, Cohen defines a correlation of 0,50 (or higher) as a strong relation. In the case of this thesis, this means that both methods do measure the exact (or almost the exact) same things (Cohen, 1988, p. 80).

The timeframe, 1995 until 2010, is chosen because this period starts just before the 'real' activities on social policy, set in motion by the Amsterdam Treaty, which can give a good look at whether or not there actually was a huge lift in activity on social policy during that period, and it will help to determine whether or not a change has occurred between the early 2000s and present day.

4. Analysis

In this chapter the findings of the research will be presented in order to be able to answer the sub-questions and finally the main question of this thesis. This section will start with an overview of how the focus of the Commission has developed throughout the years. After that, a quantitative analysis will be conducted in order to find an answer to the second sub question, and this will be followed by a qualitative analysis in order to see whether or not the expected change can be found when reading all documents in-depth.

4.1 Commission position and focus

The position and the focus of the Commission are very important for the focus of the EU on specific policy fields. What can be said in general about the position of the Commission is that the Commission is mostly interested in more integration within the EU and more power for itself or the EU (Thomson, 2009, p. 158). With regards to the subject of this thesis, social and economic policy, this means that it should be expected that the Commission will have a position that is looking for more harmonisation between Member States and more European social policy. This is an expectation based on the current situation in the European Union, while until the second half of the 1980s the situation was a bit different.

As noted earlier in this thesis, social policy had not been an important policy field for the EU or the Commission, except for some small activity in the 1970s. This changed in the 1980s, when the Delors Commission was instated in 1985. Delors was very involved with social policy and wanted the economic integration that was taking place to be ‘accompanied by a greater social integration and cohesion to provide a firm foundation for the development of the social dimension’ (Atkinson & Davoudi, 2000, p. 429). Examples of this dedication to social policy are the Commission Work Programme for 1986, in which the Commission basically stated that minimal harmonisation of working conditions would not be enough and that the “ultimate aim must be the creation of a European social area” (Commission of the European Communities, 1986, p. 9). The Delors Commission also published several papers in 1988 regarding the ‘social dimension of the internal market’ (Falkner, 1998, p. 64). It can be argued that the hard and continuing lobbying of the Commission eventually led to the adoption of the Social Chapter in 1989 by all Member

States except the UK (Falkner, 1998, pp. 64-67). After the adoption of the Social Chapter, the Delors Commission remained the most active actor in the field of social policy (O'Connor, 2005, p. 346). One last important publication by the Delors Commission was the White Paper on Social Policy, published in 1994 (O'Connor, 2005, p. 349).

It can be said that the activity of the Delors Commission was the main catalyst for the eventual activities on social policy that happened in the second half of the 1990s, eventually culminating in the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997. Therefore, it can be concluded that the focus of the Commission itself is very important with regards to the policy focus of the EU: through its position, the Commission is able to steer the policy focus to the subjects it deems important. Of course, the way the Commission handles a subject is not the only determinant of whether or not successful policy will be made, it is also important that the Member States are receptive of the Commission's proposals. With that in mind, it can be said that the timing in the 1990s was very good, because most governments of the EU Member States were located on the left of the political spectrum, which would make them more interested in creating social policy (van Gerven, 2008, pp. 19-20).

The position of the Commission is important for this thesis, because, as has been shown, a Commission that is committed to social policy, like the Commission under Delors, will be able to focus a lot of attention on the subject, whereas a Commission that finds social policy of less importance will not put much effort into the same area. Moreover, when a Commission detects certain opportunities spillovers, as it did with the SEA for example, it will try to use that opportunity to gain more influence, again as happened with the SEA. This would not only be limited to new treaties, but can also be caused by certain external events.

There have been three different Commission Presidents since 1995 (after the final Delors Commission): Santer from 1995 until 1999, Prodi from 1999 until 2004, and Barroso from 2004 until now (currently presiding over his second Commission) (European Commission, 2010). Over three Presidents and four Commissions, it is to be expected that there will be differences between their levels of attention that is paid to social policy. Therefore it can be expected that a change has occurred in the amount of focus on social policy, especially when external factors are considered, such as the economic crises that have followed one after another each other since 2008.

4.2 Quantitative findings

4.2.1 Developments in policy focus from 1995 – 2010

The quantitative results from the research on how the policy focus of the Commission has changed over the years in the period 1995 – 2010 can be found in table 3. This table shows per year how many indicators for social and economic policy were found using discourse analysis (columns marked (DA)) and content analysis (columns marked (CA)). Finally, the last two columns show the risk ratios when comparing one year to the year before (e.g. the risk ratios in table 3 for the year 1996 are the result of a comparison between 1995 and 1996). These ratios are calculated by the Yoshikoder software using the numbers found through content analysis. At the bottom of all tables is a row for the correlation coefficients between the results from the discourse analysis and the content analysis. Table 3 contains these numbers for both social and economic policy per year, from 1995 until 2010.

Table 3: Indicators found for focus on social and economic policy per year

Year	Social (DA)	Social (CA)	Economic (DA)	Economic (CA)	Risk ratios (social)*	Risk ratios (economic)*
1995	9	186	3	84		
1996	6	86	4	100	1,8305	0,7613
1997	1	119	1	27	0,6041	1,9051
1998	2	26	1	92	2,3286	0,2463
1999	2	43	0	61	0,7188	2,0283
2000	9	217	0	83	0,366	1,5907
2001	1	243	0	112	1,8295	1,0791
2002	2	20	1	5	0,4017	1,3512
2003	3	43	0	15	1,2604	1,5063
2004	4	67	0	32	0,8782	0,3612
2005	5	66	1	78	1,3287	0,4944
2006	4	41	0	30	1,1153	2,2307
2007	1	84	0	37	0,9372	1,1398
2008	11	66	0	28	1,1231	0,9125
2009	1	28	0	26	1,3386	0,8163
2010	2	53	1	10	0,4498	1,3686
Correlation coefficient	0,313 (P=0,238)		0,399 (P=0,126)			

* Results in bold are statistically significant

One first observation that can be made by looking at the results in table 3 is that, according to the correlation coefficients, both methods of analysis are likely to measure the same phenomena. Using Cohen's terminology for correlation in social science, as described

in chapter three, these coefficients can be seen as evidence that both methods do measure the same things, although there are some differences in the results of both models. Looking at the correlation purely from a statistical standpoint, the P-values of the coefficients show that the correlations for social and economic policy are not statistically significant. This could mean that both methods measure different phenomena, however since the criteria for social sciences are a little different (as described by Cohen), it can be assumed that both methods do measure the same things.

These results can of course also be displayed graphically, in order to create an easier way to quickly find certain years where noticeable changes in policy focus have occurred. These graphical overviews can be found in figures 1 and 2. Figure 1 displays the changes found using discourse analysis, and figure 2 displays the changes found using content analysis. Finally, a last way of showing the changes in policy focus is using the proportions of the terms found for social and economic policy focus compared to the total number of words used. This is shown in figure 3.

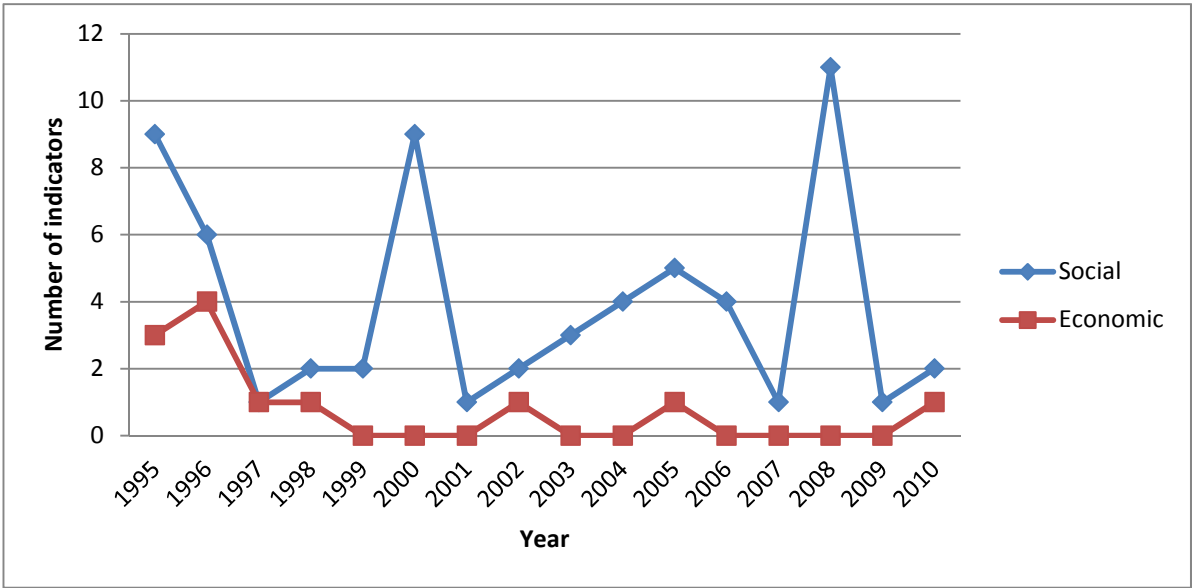


Figure 1: Changes in policy focus 1995-2010 (using discourse analysis)

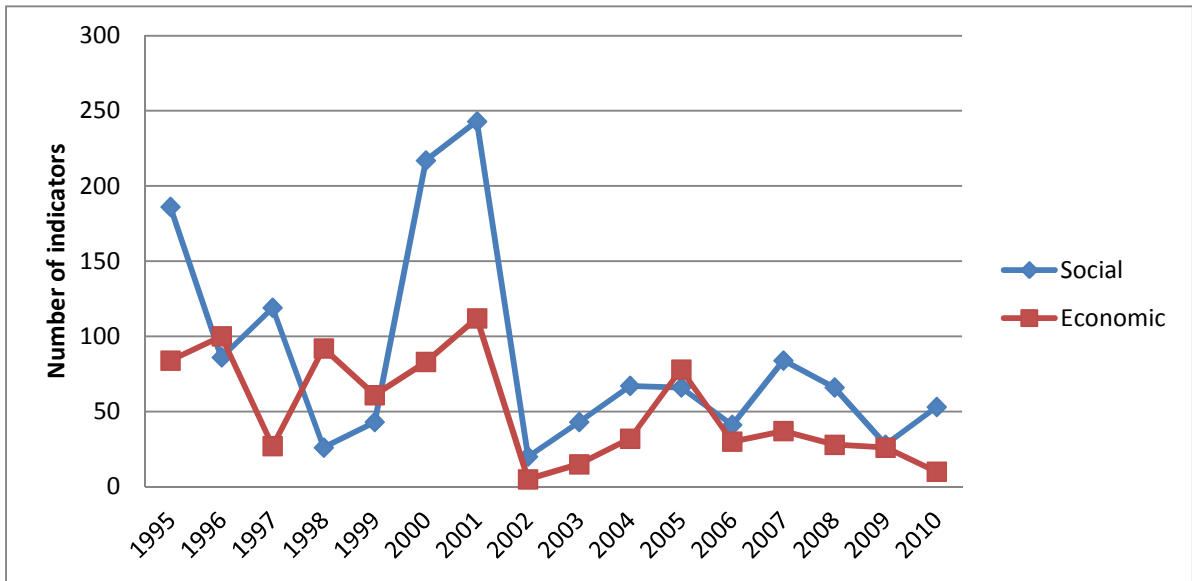


Figure 2: Changes in policy focus 1995-2010 (using content analysis)

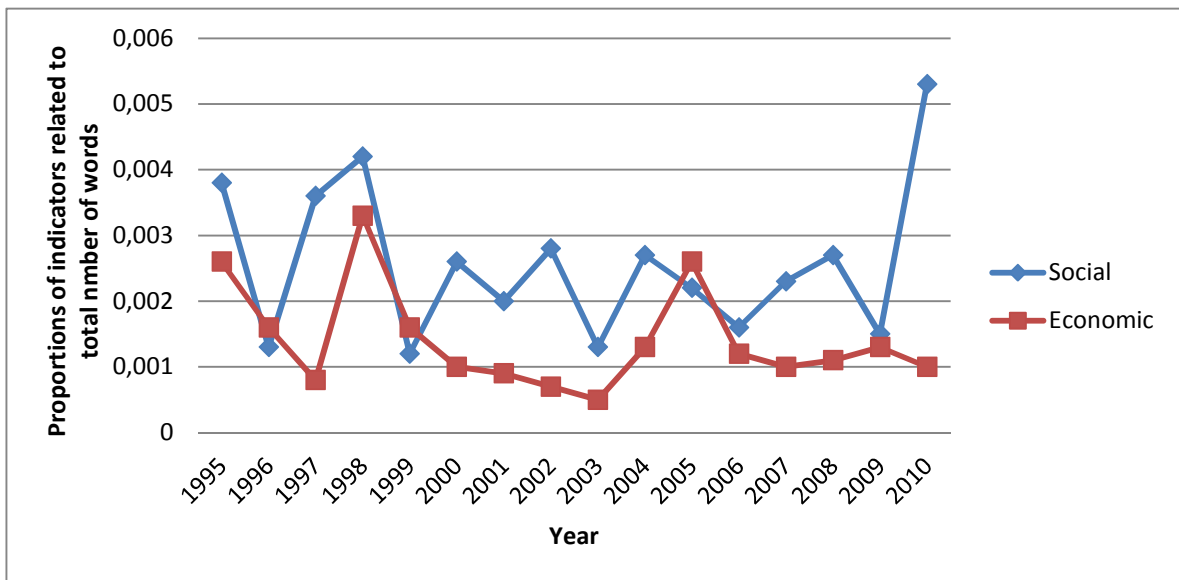


Figure 3: Indicators for policy focus as proportions of total number of words

From these figures, some general impressions can be gotten. First of all it is interesting to see that all figures show that in 1995 the focus on both policy areas appears to be higher than in most years afterwards. This would suggest that the focus on both policy fields would have decreased after 1995. However, it looks like a spike in focus on social policy occurred in 2000: both figures show higher number of indicators found around that time. Furthermore, a smaller increase in attention can be observed in the results from 2007. With regards to economic policy, a similar higher level of attention can be seen in 1996 and around 2005.

The increases in focus on social policy that are visible in the figures might be explained by certain developments that have been described in the historical overview of the developments in the field of social policy (see chapter 2). The increase that is observed in 2000 could be explained by pointing to the Lisbon Council and Nice Council meetings in that year. At the Lisbon meeting, Member States agreed to develop and implement national plans to ‘tackle poverty and social exclusion’, while the Nice meeting led to an agreement on the European Social Policy Agenda. These developments can have two effects that would explain the observed increase: first, it could be that the Council finally had caught up with the ambitions of the Commission in the field of social policy, giving the Commission more possibilities in acting successfully. Second, it could be that the preparations for both meetings were already very much focussed on the social issues that were to be discussed at these Council meetings, which in effect would also lead to an increase in attention for social policy. To make a long story short, the increase in focus on social policy in 2000 could be linked to the Lisbon and Nice Council meetings.

Another spike in focus on social policy (preceded by slow increases in years before) is observed in 2006, although this increase is smaller than the one in 2000. This can be explained by the streamlining of the OMC that happened in that year: all different processes that were at work at the same time in the years before 2006 were streamlined in that year, which of course is expected to cause an increase in attention on the subject. Whenever such an influential change in policy instruments is discussed and implemented, it is to be expected that the attention for that subject or policy field increases, since it would be very unlikely that such changes are accompanied with less or the same amount of attention compared to a situation in which everything remains the same.

One comment should be made with regards to the increase in policy focus in 2006 that are seen in these figures: it is observed in the results of the discourse analysis only, whereas the content analysis in fact shows a decrease in attention on social policy. This is one example of a number of contradictory results that can be observed when comparing the results from the discourse analysis with the results from the content analysis. Other occurrences are a change in the attention for social policy in 2008: according to the results from the discourse analysis, focus on social policy was increased in 2008 (when compared to

2007). The terms counted in the content analysis suggests that there was in fact a decrease in attention during that same time. These differences will be discussed in the next part of this chapter, since these differences occur as well when the policy focus of different Commissions is compared.

One final remark on these general results for the changes in policy focus from 1995 until 2010: even though these figures show some increases and decreases in attention it is not said that these developments are significant. In other words: it cannot be said, just by looking at these figures, that these changes are something different than a natural shift in the numbers of indicators that is to be expected. In order to see whether or not these changes are significant or not, in the next part of this chapter the statistical tests used to determine the significance of the findings are discussed.

4.2.2 Differences between Commissions

One of the questions to be answered in this thesis is whether or not a difference can be observed in policy focus between different Commissions. In order to examine this question table 4 shows the social and economic indicators per Commission, as well as the indicators found for both Barroso Commissions combined.

Table 4: Indicators of focus on social policy and economic policy per Commission

Commission	Social (DA)	Social (CA)	Economic (DA)	Economic (CA)	Risk ratios (social)*	Risk ratios (economic)*
Santer (1995-1999)	20	460	9	364		
Prodi (1999-2004)	21	633	1	308	0,9331	1,5175
Barroso 1 (2004-2008)	25	324	1	205	0,9178	0,7058
Barroso 2 (2008-2010)	14	147	1	64	0,8377	1,2174
Barroso 1+2 (vs. Prodi)	39	471	2	269	0,7689	0,8593
Correlation coefficient	0,3794 (P=0,529)		0,6235 (P=0,261)			

* Results in bold are statistically significant

From the theoretical framework set out in chapter two of this thesis and in the earlier part of this chapter, we would expect that differences in policy focus would be found between the different Commissions. The first statistical tests (t-tests) to see whether or not these expectations are correct were conducted on the results of the discourse analysis (so the numbers in the *social (DA)* and *economic (DA)* columns). Testing the difference in

attention for social policy between the Santer and Prodi Commission leads to a t-value of 0,26 with a p-value of 0,8; the difference between the Prodi and the first and second Barroso Commission combined gives a t-value of -0,28 with a p-value of 0,78; and the difference between the Santer Commission and the combined Barroso Commissions gives a t-value of 0 which has a p-value of 1. With a α of 0,05 none of these results can be used to draw the conclusion that there is a significant difference in the amount of focus on social policy between the different Commissions. In other words, it cannot be concluded that there indeed has been a difference in the amount of attention that the different Commissions have paid to social policy and economic policy.

Using these frequencies in a t-test (again with $\alpha=0,05$) to determine if there are significant differences in attention for economic policy between Commissions leads to the following results: the t-value for the difference between the Santer and the Prodi Commission is 2,17 with a p-value of 0,08. The difference between the Prodi Commission and the Barroso Commissions gives a t-value of -0,48 with a p-value of 0,64. Finally, the difference between the Santer Commission and the Barroso Commissions leads to a t-value of 1,99 with a p-value of 0,11. These findings, like the findings about the differences in focus on social policy, are again not significant: these results do not show that there is a difference between the focus on economic policy between the European Commissions since 1995.

Looking strictly at the results from the discourse analysis, no clear evidence is found that significant changes have occurred when new Commissions entered office. These results are mostly corroborated by the results from the content analysis: according to that method, no significant changes have occurred between the first four Commissions when the focus on social policy is studied, while the changes in focus on economic policy have not been significant for the last two Commissions are concerned. The correlation coefficients show that there is indeed a positive relation between both the content and discourse analysis results, meaning that when one increases, the other one increases as well, showing that they are expected to measure the same subject. It should be noted, however, that these correlation results are not very strong, especially for the social indicators. The correlation coefficient of 0,3794 for the indicators for social policy can be seen as proof for a 'medium strength' correlation (by using Cohen's method as described in chapter two) between both

methods. In other words: both methods are expected to measure the same subject to some degree, but there are also a number of differences between the two. The correlation coefficient of 0,6235 for economic policy indicators, on the other hand, can be taken as evidence for a strong correlation between both methods. Here, both methods are expected to measure the same subject to a very large degree, with very little differences.

When looking at the correlation coefficients in a more statistical way by comparing them to the significance level of 5%, a different picture emerges. Both P-values for the correlation coefficients are (far) above the α -level of 0,05, which would mean that the two methods of quantitative analysis do not measure the same phenomenon. When trying to find the cause for this result, an explanation could be the fact that there are some differences in the results of both methods, even though the general trends for social policy focus as well as economic policy focus are identified by both methods (as can also be seen in figures 1, 2 and 3).

The problem of non-correlation (as found through statistics) is most likely connected to another issue that should be addressed. Several results are shown to be statistically significant in the outcomes of the content analysis, whereas the test-results on the discourse analysis showed that there are no significant differences. This, of course, can be a serious problem for an eventual conclusion based on these results: when one method produces results showing that a change in policy focus *has* occurred (a significant change is observed), while the other method shows that such a change *has not* occurred (no significant change is observed), the question which results are correct quickly arises. These differences in results appear for changes in economic policy focus between the Prodi and Santer Commissions, and the Barroso 1 and Prodi Commissions. Content analysis also shows a significant difference in social policy focus between both Barroso Commissions combined and the Prodi Commission.

The cause of these differences between the results from content and discourse analysis is the fact that content analysis does not look at the context in which a term appears (Hardy, Harley, & Phillips, 2004), a problem already mentioned in the second chapter of this thesis. This could result in the total number of terms found through content analysis to be too high because several indicators are counted while they are not related to social or economic policy, or in other words: an overestimation of the number of indicators. The number of

social indicators found in the content analysis for all Commissions are much higher than the results from the discourse analysis. This is indeed caused by the aforementioned problem of overestimation. For the Santer Commission, for example, 460 terms are found indicating social policy focus. Many of these, however, are related to the term *conditions*. When looking at the context of the instances of this indicator found, it becomes clear that most of these are not related to social policy at all (i.e. “changing market conditions (...)”, “technically viable conditions under (...)”), causing a problem of an inflated number of indicators.

It should be noted that these problems are more distinct with regards to the social policy focus, and less with the economic focus, a conclusion that can be supported with the correlation coefficient of 0,6235 for the economic policy focus. This shows that there is less difference between the results from the discourse and content analysis for economic policy than there is for social policy.

4.2.3 Differences before and after the economic crisis (2008)

Another question that can be addressed in this research, is to what extent the attention of the Commission for social and economic policy of the Commission has changed in the period following the economic crisis in 2008. T-tests were again conducted to check if there is a significant difference in attention between the two time periods 1995 until 2007 and 2008 until 2010. The quantitative analysis of the Work Programmes and White Papers resulted in the numbers in the following table, summing up the total number of indicators found for both economic and social policy before and after the economic crisis.

Table 5: Indicators of social policy and economic policy before and after the economic crisis (2008)

	Social (DA)	Social (CA)	Economic (DA)	Economic (CA)	Risk ratio (social)*	Risk ratio (economic)*
1995-2007	49	1284	11	817		
2008-2010	14	147	1	64	0,7486	1,0941

* Results in bold are statistically significant

The t-test with regards to attention on social policy before and after the economic crisis leads to a t-value of -0,27 with a p-value of 0,81. As was the case with the differences between Commissions, this again shows that there is not enough evidence to conclude that

there is a significant difference between the periods before and after the economic crisis regarding the attention paid to social policy. In other words, the conclusion that there is a difference in attention for social or economic policy since the economic crisis cannot be drawn from these numbers.

The t-test with regards to attention for economic policy leads to a t-value of 1,05 with a p-value of 0,325 which also leads to the conclusion that there is no significant difference in the amount of attention the Commission paid to economic policy between the period before and the period after the economic crisis in 200.

Again there is a difference in results between the discourse analysis and the content analysis. The t-test on the results of the discourse analysis shows that there is no significant difference between the years before and after the 2008 economic crisis, whereas the outcomes of the content analysis suggest that there is a significant difference with regards to the social policy focus. This is again caused by the fact that the content analysis software does not look at the context of the terms that are found. The example given before, where the term *conditions* is found very often in other contexts than social policy, is of course still applicable in this situation, since the same documents are examined. Other examples of terms where this problem occurs are *exchange*, *price*, and *payment*. The problem with counting terms that are used outside of the intended context is larger with terms that are more likely to be used in other contexts. A good example of this is the term *exchange*. In the content analysis this term is found 9 times, but none of these instances is found in a context related to economic policy and therefore this leads to an overestimation of the focus on economic policy.

The correlation coefficients in this case are not reported, since they are not useful to draw any kind of conclusion. Because the periods that are compared differ a lot in length, there naturally are large differences in the number of indicators found, where the period after 2008 has far less indicators found (both in the discourse and content analysis). Since these differences are so big (and negative) the correlation will almost automatically become 1, which is not useful for this study.

4.3 *Qualitative findings*

First off, it should be noted that most of the found terms related to either social or economic policy are mostly directly related to the “pure” policy field of one or the other; there are no instances in which questions arise about whether or not a term could really be considered as a correct indicator. There are however some problematic instances: in a number of Work Programmes terms were found in sections on previously proposed policy items that are awaiting approval from other actors. This problem occurs with regards to social policy in the work programmes for 2003, 2004, and (multiple times) 2005. The problem that arises here is that it is not clear if these terms should be counted as indicators for attention for social policy or not, since the actual proposal has already been made in an earlier year and this does not clearly show an intention to do more about it. On the other hand, the fact that the Commission mentions such proposals in its Work Programme means that those proposals (and consequently the policy field concerned) are still on the agenda of the Commission. These terms are, therefore, still useable for analysis of the Commissions focus for that year.

Now, starting to look in-depth at the documents concerned, the results of the qualitative analysis are actually the same as the findings from the quantitative analysis. What is of importance, however, is the fact that even when no or a small number of terms indicating economic policy (as defined for this thesis) are found, some White Papers and Work Programmes are indeed paying attention to economic policy. The *White Paper on the Preparation of the Associated Countries of Central and Eastern Europe for Integration into the Internal Market of the Union* (Commission of the European Communities, 1995c), for example, contains no indicators as defined in this thesis, but it is indeed very much concerned with economic policy, albeit it economic policy in aspiring EU Member States. Another example can be found in the White Paper for *An Energy Policy for the European Union* (Commission of the European Communities, 1995b): although no terms as defined are found, an important impetus for this White Paper was the continuing movement towards the internal market, which had consequences that needed to be dealt with for the energy market. So again, even when no exact terms are found, the reason for this paper as well as a part of the paper (chapter 4.2) itself are focussing on economic policy.

This situation, where terms indicating a specific policy field are not found, but there is indeed attention for that policy field, mostly occurs related to economic policy. Many Work Programmes and White Papers are concerned with economic policy, but the Commission uses different phrases to state its intentions or aims. Examples can be seen in the Work Programmes for 1997, 2001, 2004, 2005, and 2007 (Commission of the European Communities, 1996a, 2001a, 2003, 2005; European Commission, 2006), or in a number of White Papers (Commission of the European Communities, 1996b, 1998, 1999). This problem occurs less with social policy, where most documents that concern social policy do contain the terms defined as indicators for social policy. Some exceptions, like the 1997 White Paper on the working time directive (Commission of the European Communities, 1997) do occur, but there are very few of these situations occurring for the field of social policy.

Looking at the language used in the documents, there is no noticeable difference in language used over the years, nor is there a real shift in policy focus that can be observed by analysing the texts in context. When trying to see whether there is a difference between focus for economic and social policy field before and after 2008, a look at the Work Programme for 2009 would be informative. Expecting the Commission to focus mostly on economic policy, one would expect there to be many mentions of economic policy and other activities meant to cope with the effects of the economic crisis, and expect a drop in attention for social policy would not be unreasonable. The Work Programme for 2009, however, does indeed contain plans in order to overcome the economic crisis, but the Commission also states that “at a time of economic distress and social pressure, it is more than ever important to advance the Social Agenda for Opportunities, Access and Solidarity” (European Commission, 2008), showing that the attention for the economic crisis does not mean that the Commission is leaving social policy to the side.

Of course, there are small differences in how much the Commission writes about social or economic policy in different documents and in different years. In general, however, a real shift cannot be observed. This becomes even more apparent when other terms than the one originally defined are taken into account. Terms like “gender equality” and “social cohesion” can both be seen as indicators for social policy, even though these were not initially defined as indicators for social policy. Even when such terms are taken into account, however, a

significant change over the years cannot be found for the field of social policy as well as the field of economic policy. Another remarkable occurrence is the fact that most White Papers are indeed concerned with economic and/or social policy, even when no defined indicators are found, whereas Work Programmes include these indicators more often. This could mean that the Commission, for whatever reason, has decided that it needs to stick closer to the Treaties (and thus use some of the terms that have been defined for this thesis using the Treaties) when writing its Work Programmes than when it is writing White Papers. This is a question, however, that falls far outside of the scope of this thesis.

The last remark that could be made in this analysis is about certain phrases that appear throughout all documents discovered and seem to only be there in order to create a favourable opinion with the reader. Examples of these terms are “(creating/ensuring) economic and social cohesion” and “consultation of social partners”. These terms can be found in many documents, among which the 1996 White Paper on air traffic management, the 2005 White Paper on sport, and the Work Programmes of 1996, 2001 and 2002 (Commission of the European Communities, 1995a, 1996c, 2001a, 2001b, 2007). It appears as if the Commission throws these terms into documents in order to make it seem like the document or proposed policy is concerned with more than just its main topic. What the exact reason for this is, is not very clear, but one could of course argue that it is meant to put certain policies and documents into a broader context, making them easier to sell to all other actors involved.

5. Conclusions

The main question for this thesis was to what extent the policy focus of the European Commission has changed with regards to social policy and economic policy in the years from 1995 until 2010. In order to find a possible change Work Programmes and White Papers published by the Commission have been examined in different ways: discourse analysis, content analysis and finally a qualitative review of all documents.

The first sub-question to be answered is on the development of the Commission's policy focus throughout the period 1995-2010. Based on the theoretical framework of this thesis, it was expected that there would have been changes in policy focus for both policy areas during this period. It was expected that the attention for social policy eventually would have become smaller, after some small increases caused by the Lisbon and Nice Council meetings, for example. For economic policy, however, the expectation was that the policy focus would have increased in the later years in this period, caused mainly by the economic problems that have been piling up since 2008.

Looking at the data from all three methods of analysis, it has become clear that overall no significant changes have occurred for the social policy field as well as the economic policy field. There are of course differences between years, but overall these changes and shifts are never statistically significant when looking at the results of the discourse analysis. The content analysis results gives a more or less similar result, however there are some results in there that are statistically significant when looking at the raw numbers. In these cases the context of the terms found by the content analysis software were examined, and that made clear that these statistically significant results are inflated by a problem of overestimation: many indicators counted are actually found in different contexts than the once they were intended for. When the contexts of the terms found are taken into account, these results appear to be insignificant as well. Although this leads to a view of the developments of both policy areas as rather stagnant, without little movement, this is not all true. Especially in the case of social policy there are a number of spikes in attention to be observed (see also figures 1 and 2 in chapter 4).

Such changes (possible increases as well as possible decreases in attention) were expected after new Commissions came into office, which means that changes in policy focus were expected in 1999, 2004, and possibly 2008. Furthermore, the idea of spillovers led to the expectation that changes in policy focus would have occurred after the different treaties that have been established from 1995 – 2010 (the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997, the Lisbon Treaty in 2007) and after the Nice and Lisbon Councils in 2000 and the 2008 economic crisis. This is also the question that is asked in the second sub-question that has been defined: *To what extent can a change in policy focus of the Commission be observed after events like the Nice and Lisbon Council meetings, the streamlining of the Open Method of Coordination and the economic crisis regarding social policy and economic policy?*

As became clear in the discussion of the findings of this study, certain spikes in policy focus are observed, especially in the field of social policy. Although these increases are not statistically significant, it is interesting to see that they coincide with events that were expected to have an effect on the Commission's policy focus. An increase in focus on social policy is observed in 2000, which can be an effect of the Nice and Lisbon Council meetings in that same year. Another spike in the focus for social policy can be seen in 2006, which would correspond with the streamlining of the OMC that happened in that year. Therefore the answer to the sub-question is that a change in policy focus can be observed after these events. These results are, however, limited to the field of social policy and no effect of the economic crises since 2008 is found. This would mean that the expectation that spillovers from Council meetings would occur can indeed be supported with the data from this study. Due to the low statistical power, and the resulting low statistical significance of the findings, the reliability of this conclusion is of course questionable. Furthermore, no evidence is found to support a claim that a new Commission also brings a different policy focus, since no (obvious) increases are found after new Commissions came into office.

Then we come back to the main question of this thesis: *To what extent has the focus of the European Commission changed between 1995 and 2010 with regards to social policy and with regards to economic policy?* It should be clear by now, that in the documents that were examined for this research no evidence can be found to conclude that the focus of the EC has changed with regard to social policy as well as economic policy. Differences between

individual years can be observed, but an overall change within one or both policy fields cannot be found. Both the quantitative and qualitative analyses show that no (significant) change has occurred. Of course, these results mean that the effects that were expected based on the theoretical framework are not found, which could mean that the effects of spillovers and Commission focus are less influential than was assumed. It should be noted, however, that the documents studied for this thesis are not the only documents that could be analysed in order to determine policy focus. Furthermore, even though this thesis only studied the focus of the Commission, based on the institutional setup of the EU in which the Commission has become the de facto initiator of policy for both social as well as economic policy, this does not mean that these results can be extrapolated to the EU as a whole. It might well be that other institutions, the European Parliament or the Council, have had a different policy focus, but those institutions fall outside of the scope of this thesis. In other words: although the results of this study might indicate that the policy focus of the Commission regarding social and economic policy has not changed significantly from 1995 until 2010, this does not in any way mean that this is true for all institutions of the EU and in effect the EU as a whole (if one could speak of a single policy focus of the EU as a whole). It might be interesting to study whether or not the policy focus of other EU institutions show the same consistency over the years, or if significant changes in those institutions can be found. For example: it might well be the European Council and the Council of Ministers are focussing much more on the effects of the economic crisis, whereas the Commission is more concerned with the daily tasks of the EU and focusses on the preservation of stable policies. This, however, might be the subject of another study.

The relevance of these results can be that they show that the policy focus of the Commission is much more stable than was expected, showing that the Commission is not easily influenced by external influences, even when it sometimes seems that way because of certain events getting above-average attention. They could be taken to mean that the Commission is not solely motivated by (political) gains or its own goals, but is also looking to maintain stable policies, at least in the field of social and economic policy. The results might mean that the effects of spillovers are overestimated, since it cannot be said that the events looked at in this thesis and that were expected to have spillover effects influencing the policy focus of the Commission (Treaty of Amsterdam, Nice Council, and the Treaty of

Lisbon) have had a significant influence on the policy focus of the Commission. Furthermore, the results do not support (theoretical) claims that the policy focus of the Commission changes between different Commissions, nor can it be said that a very far-reaching event like the 2008 economic crisis has had an influence.

Limitations

Of course, there are certain limitations to this study that deserve some attention, in order to make clear to what extent the conclusions should be considered valid. First of all, a general remark should be made about the timing of this research. Within policy studies, the fact of policy lag is a principle that describes how policy making always “lags” behind the current events. For this study, this could mean that the real policies intended to deal with the economic crisis would be described and implemented in documents written after 2010. The relatively short period between the start of the economic crisis in 2008 and the time of this study could mean that the real effects of the crisis on the thinking and agenda setting of the Commission cannot be determined at this moment.

Another limitation of this study has to do with the small size of the samples used: because the sample size is relatively small, the conclusions that there is no significant relationship between any of the theoretical expected causes (Commission focus, spillovers, economic crisis) and the attention for social and economic policy might not be true. This problem may also be called “low statistical power” (Shadish et al, 2002). One way to resolve this problem is to take a larger sample by (for example) including green papers in order to get more reliable statistical outcomes.

Another problem that might be present in this study can be called a problem of “history” (Shadish et al, 2002, p. 55). This problem arises when several events are happening at the same time, making it difficult to conclude that a certain effect can be attributed to the one event under consideration. For example, this research attempted to find out if there was a change between the different Commissions. When comparing results between the Santer and Prodi Commissions, the results might be influenced by two separate events: a new Commission that came into office could have been the event producing the result, but also the Nice Council in 2000 could have its influence. This could mean that results about a

possible change after 1999 are not only influenced by the coming into office of the Prodi Commission, but also by the effects of the Nice Council. A similar problem could be present in the research on the effects of the economic crisis in 2008: because a new Commission came into office around the same time as the economic crisis happened, the results could be caused by both events, while this research would attribute it mainly to the economic crisis (due to the phrasing of the questions).

One more problem regarding internal validity could be the fact that the working programmes are not very similar, although they all serve the same goal: explaining what the Commission is planning to do in the coming year. Some programmes only outline the broader goals of the Commission, such as the 1998 Work Programme, whereas others includes list with key actions (2002), or even include lists of legislation to be proposed or waiting approval (2008). Since some Work Programmes then might be more elaborate than others, this might have an effect in the way that the more elaborate programmes would be expected to have more counted indicators and therefore (also due to the sample size) they might have an exaggerated influence on the test outcomes. This problem might be enlarged when its effect is combined with the earlier problem regarding terms found in sections about proposals waiting for approval, since it is not really clear whether or not these terms should be counted. This problem is already limited by the usage of content analysis, which creates results that are independent of the total number of words that are used in a document (or combination of documents for one year).

One final thing that deserves mentioning is the construct validity of this research. The low amount of found terms that were defined as indicators for both policy fields could mean that these terms are not well chosen. Especially with regards to the terms for economic policy this could be the case, since there are little exact terms found, while many White Papers are indeed about economic policy, for example. Looking at the numbers of indicators that are found, this problem is expected to be more present in the field of economic policy, whereas in the field of social policy, more terms are found and it can be expected that these are good indicators for that policy field. One cause for this discrepancy between social and economic policy can be that the Commission feels more free when it is talking about economic policy, a field that has been part of the EU for a long time, whereas the field of

social policy is rather new, which could cause the Commission to feel less secure talking about social policy. That could have as a consequence that the Commission sticks to the language used in the Treaties more in the field of social policy than in the field of economic policy. Of course, many more causes could be present, and finding out what really is the cause could be the subject of a different study altogether.

Annex A: summaries of White Papers and Work Programmes

Commission's Work Programme for 1995

Date of publication	08-02-1995
Terms related to social policy	Social security (4), working conditions, social exclusion (2), equality between men and women
Terms related to economic policy	Deficits (2)

The “main thrust” of this working programme is summarised in the introduction. The following goals are stated: “building a strong economy to create new jobs”; “establishing economic and monetary union on sound economic foundations”; “strengthening economic, social and regional solidarity”; “improving cooperation in the fields of home affairs and justice”; “establishing the Union as a strong and reliable partner in the international arena”; “managing the Union better”; and finally “preparing for the Intergovernmental Conference in 1996”. The first thing that can be noticed about this working programme is that the first two goals mentioned are purely economic, and except for the mention of strengthening social solidarity, so it would be expected that economic policy would get the most attention in this working programme. There are, however, more indicators for social policy found in this document, but this does not mean that social policy did actually get much more attention. One instance of the term “social security” for example, was part of the title of the “Directors-General for Employment and social security”, making it impossible to use this instance as an indicator for attention for social policy.

Most of this Work Programme is indeed about economic policy: ways to create new jobs, measures to help small businesses to simplify their operations, creating a stable foundation for the EMU, etcetera. Social policy is a large part in the chapter on “strengthening economic, social and regional solidarity.” This chapter starts with proposals in the field of employment and social affairs (containing the proposed initiative for “portability of occupational pensions”, and a programme to combat social exclusion (...)). This chapter contains a separate subsection that is concerned with “equal opportunities and women rights,” containing (new) proposals on ways to continue to promote equal opportunities for men and women.

White Paper: Preparation of the Associated Countries of Central and Eastern Europe for Integration into the Internal Market of the Union

Date of publication	03-05-1995
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

The White Paper starts with an overview of the background for this White Paper, including the legal and economic context of the paper, where the part on the economic context is noticeably longer than the parts on the legal context. The economic part is mainly about the ways in which the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC) are working in order to reform their economies towards market economies. The paper then goes into the essential characteristics that are needed for the economies in the CEEC and what legislation should be adopted for a smooth transition into the internal market of the EU. After that there is an overview of the current situation in the countries involved, and the paper ends with describing the ways in which the Union will provide assistance to the countries in order to achieve the goals and the rewards and benefits that are to be expected when the recommendations from the paper are implemented.

Even though no exact phrases were found during the initial analysis of this paper, this paper in fact is mostly about economic policy (albeit not directly concerned to policy within the Union). The paper is all about what changes the CEECs should do in order to ensure a smooth inclusion in the internal already in place. Therefore this can be seen as an economic policy paper.

White Paper: An Energy Policy for the European Union

Date of publication	13-12-1995
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

This White Paper is purely focussed on the creation of an energy policy for the EU, as can already be seen in the title. It starts with an introduction in which the reasons for the

publication of this White Paper are described, being the necessity of “increased solidarity on energy matters” because of “moves toward an integrated and more competitive energy market”; a common energy policy that removes the differences between Member States could help responding to “destabilising effects of changes in energy prices”; the importance of combining economic growth with sustainable development; a common energy policy would help the EU with carrying out responsibilities by the actors involved. The paper then goes on to describe four elements of the framework: globalisation of markets, increasing environmental concerns, technology developments, and Community institutional responsibilities.

What can be seen as an indicator for attention on economic policy, is part 4.2 of the White Paper about the integration of the market. This part is about how to ensure an internal energy market that works well, and how a “favourable climate for investment” can be created. As such, this part of the White Paper can be considered as a sign that the Commission was interested in the economic policy aspects of their energy policy, although this part is only six pages in a total of forty-six.

With regards to social policy, this paper does not contain any mention of it, except for the hollow phrase that “this programme would thus contribute to achieving economic and social cohesion” that is found in many of the documents examined, without it being used anywhere with substantial meaning.

White Paper: Air Traffic Management – Freeing Europe’s airspace

Date of publication	06-03-1996
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

As the short introduction of this paper explains, this White Paper is meant to explore the “current situation in air traffic management in Europe”, and to find solutions for existing problems in order to create one air traffic management system for the whole EU. It goes on to describe the basic concepts and actors related to air traffic management, and what problems were occurring at the time of publication. This White Paper cannot be seen as indicative for attention for economic or social policy. Although some remarks concerning

costs and the internal market can be found, this paper is far from being a paper on economic policy. Apart from the mentioning of air traffic management being important for improving economic and social cohesion (a phrase that is found in many publications), there is nothing here that makes this paper something that can be seen as social policy.

The Commission's Work Programme for 1996

Date of publication	10-11-1995
Terms related to social policy	Information of workers, working conditions, social protection, social security
Terms related to economic policy	Government deficits, deficits (3)

The Work Programme for 1996 contains a separate paragraph on social policy. This paragraph does not contain any in-depth description of actions to be taken, but it does list a wide range of topics to be handled: stimulating social dialogue between social partners, updating the social action programme that had been adopted in 1995, special attention for discrimination, and continued action for equal opportunities for men and women.

Economic policy gets more attention, with specific chapters on preparing for the EMU, and "taking full advantage of the Union's potential" which is mostly concerned with completing and enforcing the single market and ways to promote new economic sectors in order to secure an important position for Europe in those sectors. There are also proposals to make the policies of the EU more effective in order to improve competitiveness.

The rest of this Work Programme does not concern economic or social policy, but it can be concluded that both policy areas take an important place in this Work Programme.

White Paper: A Strategy for Revitalising the Community's Railways

Date of publication	30-06-1996
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

This White Paper is concerned with the transformation of railways towards more privatised companies. This is mostly an economic policy, since it is concerned with moving (mostly) state-owned companies towards the open market. A part of this White Paper,

however, is dedicated to the social consequences of these moves, including for example the retraining of workers that will become redundant as a consequence of this policy.

The largest part of this paper is concerned with economic aspects of the transition towards more market based companies: debt relief for existing companies, the ways in which new companies would be allowed to enter the railway market, and the expansion of the internal market to include railway systems (seventeen pages in total). The social aspects regarding this policy are dealt with in a much smaller part, consisting of about two pages.

The Commission's Work Programme for 1997 – Political priorities

Date of publication	17-10-1996
Terms related to social policy	Social protection
Terms related to economic policy	None

In this Work Programme for 1997, terms indicating social policy are only found once: the Commission states that it will work in the “areas of equality and opportunity, social protection, the role of the social partners, the organization of work and worker information and consultation.” How or what the Commission would do, however, is not made clear. Therefore it can be argued that the Commission was paying attention to social policy, but it is difficult to assess whether or not it was really concentrating on this policy field, or that this mentioning of social policy was mainly symbolic.

Economic policy can be found in more than one place in this Work Programme. The Commission talks about adjusting the structural policies, creating a financial framework for after 1999, and the preparations for the EMU. Again, however, it is not clear what exact actions or proposals the Commission has for these areas.

White Paper on Sectors and Activities Excluded from the Working Time Directive

Date of publication	15-07-1997
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

This White Paper is concerned with the working time directive and its consequences. This directive is a clear example of EU social policy, therefore a paper that is meant as an addition

to that directive can be seen as social policy as well. This becomes clear in the introduction of the White Paper, where it is stated that this paper should “find the best ways of ensuring the protection of the health and safety, with regard to working time, of workers currently excluded from the Working Time Directive”. The paper goes on to describe the problems at hand and then analyses the problems per sector exclude from the directive. This paper can be seen as purely social policy, because it is only concerned with the working conditions for workers, and there is no substantial mention of economic policy (or other policy areas).

Energy for the Future: Renewable Sources of Energy. White paper for a Community Strategy and Action Plan

Date of publication	26-11-1997
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

As the title already makes clear, this White Paper is meant to provide a strategy for the EU that will allow the Member States to make sure that they will produce more and more renewable energy. A number of reasons for the importance of this policy are given: it will reduce dependence on external sources, it can help creating jobs, and it can help achieve “greater social and economic cohesion within the Community”.

The main features of the action plan are describe in the second chapter of the White Paper and include “measures for the internal market” (ensuring market access for renewable energy, for example), “reinforcing community policies” (including attention for growth, competitiveness and employment), “strengthening co-operation between Member States”, and finally “support measures”. Some of these features are economic policy, such as the measures for the internal market, and none can be seen as social policy (although an argument could be made that attention for employment can also be social policy). This White Paper, therefore, contains more economic policy than social policy measures.

The Commission's Work Programme for 1998 – The political priorities

Date of publication	15-10-1997
Terms related to social policy	Social security, social exclusion
Terms related to economic policy	Sound public finances

In its Work Programme for 1998, the Commission states that it wants to focus on the following five priorities: employment, the euro, Agenda 2000, "Union action in the world at large," and the EU "at the service of citizens".

The Commission links employment directly to its own economic policies, stating that it will pay "special attention" to its own macro-economic policy, for example. It does also connect the field of employment to social policy, by stating that it will use all instruments it has to create a "more inclusive Europe" in order to tackle social exclusion. Furthermore, the Commission writes that, through the social dialogue, social security systems should be adapted in order to get "substantial improvements in the operation of labour markets".

The priority of the euro is also connected with economic policy. With regards to this priority the Commission would "complete the final technical preparations for the introduction of the euro, during which the exchange rates between participating currencies will be irrevocably fixed."

The Agenda 2000 priority also contains some subjects of economic policy, such as taxation, "a suitable financial framework," and helping small and medium-sized businesses.

In this Work Programme there is attention for both economic and social policy, and the Commission describes specific actions to be taken on both policy fields.

White Paper: Fair Payment for Infrastructure Use: A phased approach to a common transport infrastructure charging framework in the EU

Date of publication	22-07-1998
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

This White Paper is mostly concerned with economic policy: the aim is to find a solution to the differences in charging principles for the use of infrastructure between Member States (for example the difference in taxes for vehicles). Because these differences lead to “significant distortions of competition,” the Commission deemed it necessary to create a common approach. There is nothing related to social policy in this White Paper, and it should be noted that the principle of “marginal social cost charging” mentioned in the paper has nothing to do with social policy: it is about charging non-users of certain infrastructure for the maintenance of that infrastructure.

The Commission’s Work Programme for 1999 – The Political Priorities

Date of publication	26-11-1998
Terms related to social policy	Social protection
Terms related to economic policy	Sound public finances

The Commission states the following objectives for 1999: “a strong economy capable of creating more jobs; a stable economic and monetary union; increased economic, social and regional solidarity; greater security within the European Union; transparent, efficient management of European affairs at the service of its citizens; and being a strong and reliable partner in the international arena.” As the first two objectives are clear matters of economic policy, it is clear that the Commission is still focusing on economic policy in 1999, although only one defined indicator for economic policy can be found in the Work Programme. A separate part of this programme is devoted to ensuring the success of the EMU, among other economic goals, showing a clear focus on economic policy for 1999.

Social policy does not get much attention in this Work Programme, except for some throwaway lines about modernising and improving social protection and improving social

inclusion. Therefore it can be said that in this Work Programme, the focus of the Commission is mainly on economic topics and not on other policy fields as such.

White Paper on Modernisation of the Rules Implementing Articles 85 and 86 of the EC Treaty

Date of publication	28-04-1999
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

In this White Paper the Commission proposes measures to modernise the ways in which Article 85 on restrictive practices by businesses and Article 86 on the abuse of dominant position are enforced. Both of these articles are directly concerned with competition policy. Although competition policy is close to economic policy and can have consequences in the realm of economic policy, this White Paper cannot be seen as focussed (partly) on economic policy, while social policy is in no way related to the contents of this White Paper.

White Paper on Commerce

Date of publication	27-01-1999
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

The main idea of this White Paper is that the importance of the commerce sector in the economy should be made acknowledge, and the paper contains ideas that should help improve the competitiveness in the commerce sector. This would, in turn, help protect jobs as well as create new jobs. According to the paper, these activities should help maintain “its major contribution to employment and social cohesion”. Although social cohesion is mentioned in this paper, it is mainly concerned with measures to improve competitiveness within the commerce sector. Therefore it should be seen as mainly economic and competition policy, with some spillovers into social policy. These spillovers, however, are not the focus or main goal of the paper.

The Commission's Work Programme for 2000

Date of publication	21-03-2000
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

In its Work Programme for 2000 the Commission gives four priorities it will focus on: "promoting new forms of European governance"; "a stable Europe with a stronger voice in the world"; "a new economic and social agenda"; "a higher quality of life for all". The implementation of a new economic and social agenda is of specific interest for this study.

White Paper on Food Safety

Date of publication	12-1-2000
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

As the title states, this paper is about assuring high standards for food safety. This is a policy that is not connected with social or economic policy, though, again, the measures proposed could spill over into the field of economic policy.

White Paper on Environmental Liability

Date of publication	09-02-2000
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

This White Paper is concerned with environmental policy. It describes ways in which persons and businesses responsible for environmental damages should be dealt with, and it proposes a regime in order to enforce the rules, so a change in attitude of towards environmental liability should take place. This paper is not concerned with economic or social policy, although the measures proposed could of course have economic impact.

White Paper: Reforming the Commission

Date of publication	01-03-2000
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

Being about the reforming of the Commission, this paper is not related to economic or social policy in any way, and therefore it is not of much interest to this study. The goal of this paper is to create a framework that will help members of the Commission to deal “with the more complex ethical issues involved in new ways of delivering public services and new management approach, and to prevent corruption.”

The Commission’s Work Programme for 2001

Date of publication	12-1-2000
Terms related to social policy	Social exclusion
Terms related to economic policy	None

For 2001, the Commission outlined four priorities: “promoting new forms of governance”; “stabilising the European continent (...)”; “launching a new economic and social agenda (...)”; and achieving a real improvement in daily life for all”. The third and the last priority can be seen as economic and social goals that could be linked with economic and social policy.

With regards to social policy, the programme mentions the implementation of the social agenda from the Nice Council. This mainly relates to the implementation of the OMC regarding the problem of social exclusion, together with legislative proposals regarding working conditions. These remarks and proposals are in-depth descriptions of action to be taken in the field of social policy. The same goes for the economic policy discussed in this working programme: actions to be taken are clearly described, sometimes in relation to the Lisbon process.

The fourth priority stated mainly includes environmental, health, and food policies. This priority and its associated actions are not useful for this study.

White Paper: European Governance

Date of publication	25-07-2001
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

At the base of this White Paper lies a “paradox”: while citizens expect public institutions and governments to act in order to solve problems on the one hand, on the other hand they are increasingly distrusting of those same institutions and governments. In this White Paper, the Commission describes measures that should be taken in order to make clearer to citizens what the EU actually does and “what it stands for”. This should be done by getting “more people and organisations involved in shaping and delivering EU policy”. Once again, this is a paper not related to social or economic policy.

White Paper: European transport policy for 2010: time to decide

Date of publication	12-09-2001
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

This White Paper is mostly concerned with technical arrangements regarding transport policy, because: “the transport system needs to be optimised to meet the demands of enlargement and sustainable development”. Attention is being paid to the economic side of the transport policy field, with a separate chapter on the funding of the transport sector, but “pure” economic policy is not to be found, everything is related to funding and regulating the transport system. Social policy is not present in noticeable substance, even though the Commission writes in its introduction that “a modern transport system should be sustainable from an economic and social as well as an environmental viewpoint.”

White Paper: Strategy for a future Chemicals Policy

Date of publication	27-02-2001
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

With the chemical industry being the third largest industry in the EU and chemicals being possibly rather dangerous for human health, the Commission deemed it necessary to write this White Paper in order to ensure “a high level of protection of human health and the environment”. The objectives stated in the paper are not related to economic or social policy, although the “maintenance and enhancement of the competitiveness of the EU chemical industry” can have an influence on economic policy through the competition policy. A real interest for specific economic or social policy is not found in this White Paper, however.

White Paper: A new impetus for European youth

Date of publication	21-11-2001
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

This White Paper is about the position of young people in the European Union and the ways in which the EU would be able to improve that position. It mentions the Open Method of Coordination as an important instrument in order to encourage cooperation between Member States in the field of youth policy with attention for a number of policy subjects that are “not covered by other political processes such as employment, social integration and education”. This should correspond, according to the Commission, with “the kind of activities and resources normally associated with youth policies at national level”. The paper goes on to mention several aspects of youth policy that are important, linking it specifically to employment and social integration. It can, thus, be said that this White Paper shows attention for both policy fields examined in this research.

The Commission's Work Programme for 2002

Date of publication	05-12-2001
Terms related to social policy	Social exclusion
Terms related to economic policy	Monetary policy

This Work Programme starts with an overview of the activities the Commission has done in 2001, which causes a problem for the quantitative analysis, because a number of indicators are counted in this part of the Work Programme. Later on, the Commission states the following priorities for 2002: "safety and security"; "ensuring the successful launch of the euro"; "implementing the EU's sustainable development strategy"; "new European governance"; "enlargement negotiations"; the relationship with countries in the Mediterranean region; emphasise the "health and education focus of the EU's development cooperation policies, as part of the overarching objective of combating poverty".

Of course, the actions proposed to ensure the successful launch of the euro are clearly economic policy. The goal of sustainable development are linked, among others, to battling social exclusion and can as such be seen as (by means of reinforcing the OMC in the field of social exclusion and extending it to "pensions in the context of an ageing society") attention for social policy. The other goals or actions in this programme are not directly related to economic or social policy.

The Commission's Legislative and Work Programme for 2003

Date of publication	30-10-2002
Terms related to social policy	Social inclusion, social security, working conditions
Terms related to economic policy	None

For 2003, the Commission stated three political priorities: "an enlarged Europe"; "stability and security"; and "a sustainable and inclusive economy". Only the third priority and the actions related to it contain proposals related to social and economic policy. The referrals to social policy, however, are limited to noting that integration of immigrants is necessary for social cohesion as well as economic efficiency. This Work Programme, therefore, only contains serious attention for economic policy, even when this attention is apparently of less importance than the other goals, with no real attention for social policy. It

is clear that most of the attention of the Commission in 2003 would go to the upcoming enlargement and providing stability and safety.

White Paper: Space: a new European frontier for an expanding Union. An action plan for implementing the European Space policy

Date of publication	11-11-2003
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

Focussing on the space policy of the EU, this proposals made in this White Paper are meant to eventually help “economic growth, job creation and industrial competitiveness,” “a successful enlargement of the Union,” “sustainable development,” “a stronger security and defence for all,” and “fighting poverty and aiding development”. Social policy is not mentioned in this document, and economic policy is only a small part of the White Paper: besides the mentioning of economic growth, job creation and industrial competitiveness in the introduction of the paper, the only part were this is discussed consists of four pages and this part is about innovation and competitiveness, therefore this cannot be seen as real attention for economic policy.

The Commission’s legislative and work Programme for 2004

Date of publication	29-10-2003
Terms related to social policy	Social inclusion, working conditions, social security (2)
Terms related to economic policy	None

The Commission list three priorities it will focus on in 2004: “accession of ten new Member States”; “stability”; and “sustainable growth”. Social policy is not to be found in the descriptions of these priorities and the proposals to address these priorities. Economic policy is related to the priority of sustainable growth: several initiatives are proposed that are economic policy. Among these proposals are for example “support innovative sustainable and energy-saving technologies” and “develop the European Research Area and implement the action plan to increase investment in research and development”.

One comment that should be made with regard to the quantitative analysis that became clear during the second phase of analysis, is that all four instances of social policy that were counted appear in “Annex 4 – Commission proposals awaiting action by the legislative authority in 2004” and therefore are difficult to justify as indicators for attention for social policy in 2004, as the proposals already had been made at an earlier time.

White Paper on the review of Regulation 4056/86, applying the EC competition rules to maritime transport

Date of publication	13-10-2004
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

Regulation 4056/86 is about a “block exemption for agreements, decisions and concerted practices of all or part of the members of one or more liner conferences (...)” which in essence is a form of competition policy. Social policy is not mentioned in this White Paper, and economic policy, again, is only involved by its connection with competition policy, but economic policy is not talked about specifically in this paper.

White Paper on services of general interest

Date of publication	12-05-2004
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

Services of general interest as a term “covers both market and non-market services which the public authorities class as being of general interest and subject to specific public service obligations”. This White Paper aims at setting out an approach for the EU to get a role in which it will help “foster the development of high-quality services of general interest”. Keeping in mind what these services are, this White Paper is actually concerned with both social and economic policy: the social policy can be found in certain services that are considered to be services of general interest, whereas the economic policy can be seen in the topics of ensuring an open market. This White Paper contains parts that indicate attention for both social and economic policy.

Commission Work Programme for 2005

Date of publication	26-01-2005
Terms related to social policy	Working conditions (3), social protection, equality between men and women
Terms related to economic policy	None

The key priorities set out in this Work Programme, the first programme of the Barroso Commission, are “prosperity, solidarity and security, and external responsibility”. Solidarity and security will be treated as complementing prosperity.

The priority of prosperity is mostly related to economic policy (with actions such as “development of policy in key internal market areas such as public procurement (...)” and “promoting better economic governance (...”).

Solidarity can be (partly) defined as a priority for social policy, with the specific mentioning of a new Social Policy Agenda for the next five years and stating that work is needed to battle discrimination and “promote gender equality, encourage labour mobility, anticipate the problems associated with restructuring, and to launch a debate on how to tackle the problem of the Union’s ageing populations.

The other priorities in this Work Programme are not connected to social or economic policy by the Commission.

White Paper: Financial Services Policy 2005-2010

Date of publication	01-12-2005
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

This White Paper can be seen as focussing on economic policy, with one of the three objectives of the Commission being the removal of economic barriers so capital will be able to move freely throughout the EU. Therefore this document can actually be seen as directly concerning one of the terms that have been defined as indicators for economic policy (free movement of capital) even though it is not mentioned exactly as that.

White Paper on exchanges of information on convictions and the effect of such convictions in the European Union

Date of publication	25-12-2005
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

With information on convictions being part of judicial policy, which at that time was still part of the third pillar regarding justice and home affairs, and social and economic policy being in the first pillar, this paper is not concerned with both policy fields at hand in this thesis.

Unlocking Europe's full potential: Commission Legislative and Work Programme 2006

Date of publication	25-10-2005
Terms related to social policy	Social exclusion, modernisation of social protection systems, equality between men and women (2)
Terms related to economic policy	None

The Commission sets out four goals it wants to meet in 2006: “turning words into deeds under the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs”; “developing a cohesive Union which recognises common responsibilities and reinforces prosperity”; “working together to combat crime and terrorism, promote health, and minimise risk”; and “the Union must continue to promote a strong voice in the world, with a particular focus on preparing future enlargements, on its neighbourhood and on Africa”.

The first goal, summarised as “prosperity” by the Commission, is mainly about economic policy (improving the single market in order to create a better business environment for small and medium enterprises, scrutinisation of existing legislation regarding free movement, preparing for the enlargement of the Eurozone).

The second goal, summed up as “solidarity”, contains several social policy areas: announced proposals for tackling the problem of an ageing demographic; reinforcing and modernising policies on gender equality; streamlining of the OMC to help modernise social protection systems and battle social exclusion.

The other goals, “safety,” “Europe as a world partner”, and “delivery and better regulation” are not related to economic or social policy.

White Paper on a European communication policy

Date of publication	01-02-2006
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

The goal of this White Paper is to create a process in which the activities of the EU institutions are communicated better towards Member States and their citizens, which should lead to more interaction between all actors involved. The main idea behind this White Paper is that there is a large gap between what citizens sees as EU activities and what the EU actually does. After the introduction, the paper continues by giving several options in which the EU could connect with other actors, how the public opinion should be understood, and better ways in which cooperation should take place. Although this White Paper could have a big effect on many policy fields, when its aim is also achieved, in this form it cannot be seen as attention for a specific policy field, economic or social.

White Paper on enhancing the single market framework for investment funds

Date of publication	15-11-2006
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

This paper is directly concerned with economic policy. In this White Paper, the Commission describes a way in which legislation regarding investment funds in the EU could be simplified, “while providing attractive and secure investment to investors.” This is purely an economic policy, attempting to create a better single market for investment funds within the EU. Another way to summarize this paper is by using one of the terms counted during the analysis of all documents: the paper is about ensuring free movement of capital (or payments) by simplifying the rules for investment funds.

Commission Legislative and Work Programme 2007

Date of publication	24-10-2006
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

The priorities the Commission sets out in this Work Programme are: modernising the European economy; addressing the challenges of European society; a better management of migration flows; secure, competitive and sustainable energy; making Europe a better place to live; Europe as a world partner. It should go without saying that the priority to modernise the European economy contains several aspects of economic policy, so this can be seen as clear attention for economic policy (with for example a Single Market review done by the Commission, and the reform of certain economic sectors).

Social policy gets less attention in this Work Programme, with only the priority to make “Europe a better place to live” being related to social policy. On closer inspection, however, this is only related to social policy with regards to a proposed European strategy in the field of social services, the rest of this priority is about a health strategy, urban transport, and combatting terrorism.

The programme further contains a description of the daily tasks of the Commission and ideas on how regulation of the EU could be simplified and modernised. Specific attention for social policy, however, is not present in this Work Programme.

White Paper on sport

Date of publication	30-05-2007
Terms related to social policy	Social inclusion
Terms related to economic policy	None

The European Commission expresses a serious interest in sport in this paper, writing that sport has an “essential role in the European society, in particular when it needs to bring itself closer to citizens and to tackle issues that matter directly to them.” This White Paper is meant to give “a strategic orientation on the role of sport in Europe, to encourage debate on

specific problems, to enhance the visibility of sport in EU policy-making and to raise public awareness of the needs and specificities of the sector.”

Social policy has gotten its own subsection in this White Paper called: “Using the potential of sport for social inclusion, integration and equal opportunity”. This part of the White Paper, however, is more or less the statement made in the first sentence, “sport makes an important contribution to economic and social cohesion and more integrated societies,” with more or less a repetition of that statement in the rest of the paragraphs. There are no real proposals for Community action or new legislation that should help sport to really start helping on social inclusion, integration and equal opportunities. The only concrete actions described are that sport will still be used in OMC reports on social inclusion and social protection; the Commission will keep in mind the importance of sport for people with disabilities when its Action Plan on the European Union Disability Strategy is written; and the Commission will also mention sport in its Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men 2006-2010. The part on the social policy side of sport is rather limited and more a general reminder that sport plays an important role in dealing with certain problems than an in-depth description of how that should actually work.

The economic dimension gets an entire chapter in this White Paper, and unlike the part on the social implications, this part does in fact has a number of real policy proposals, or at least proposals for the policy direction that is wanted by the Commission.

It seems that the economic dimension has gotten more attention than the social dimension, which is expressed by a more in-depth part on the economic dimension.

White Paper on a Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related health issues

Date of publication	30-05-2007
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

This White Paper is an expression of the increasing attention that obesity related issues have gotten in recent years. It expresses the ways in which the Commission believes action should be taken by the EU, the Member States, and by private actors. Social or economic

policy is very hard to find in this paper, although the fact that the Commission wants private actors to also provide for affordable healthy options could translate into economic policy (for example by subsidising certain products). In general, however, this White Paper contains no real substantive social or economic policy mentions.

White Paper: together for health: A Strategic Approach for the EU 2008-2013

Date of publication	23-10-2007
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

This White Paper describes the way the Commission would like to approach health policy. It never mentions social or economic policy (actions), except for some throwaway sentences like “strengthening integration of health concerns into all policies at Community, Member State and regional levels (...)”. Overall, this White Paper is not useful as an indicator for social or economic policy focus.

Commission Legislative and Work Programme for 2008

Date of publication	23-10-2007
Terms related to social policy	Social exclusion, social protection, social inclusion (2), social protection systems, social security (2)
Terms related to economic policy	Credit (3)

In this Work Programme, the last programme published before the economic crisis hit, the Commission lists the following priorities it will focus on: growth and jobs; sustainable Europe; an integrated approach to migration; putting the citizens first; Europe as a world partner. Especially the first priority, growth and jobs, is related to the scope of this study. This is about both social policy, which becomes clear from the mentioning of the importance of preventing poverty and social exclusion and the promotion of social protection, as well as economic policy, shown by the announcement of a “Small Business Act”.

In the rest of this programme the Commission describes the daily tasks it will be tending to, which does not contain any useful information, new policies it will try to create, which contains the conclusion that existing EU social policies need modernization in order to react

to “the challenges of globalization and the need to anticipate and manage change”. The final two chapters of this programme are about simplifying existing legislation and “communicating Europe”. Both these parts do not mention economic or social policy as such and thus are not of use for this study.

When the results of the quantitative analysis of this Work Programme are reviewed, it shows that 11 instances of indicators of social policy are found. It is worth noting that this number is inflated by the appearance of seven terms found in Annex A (strategic and priority initiatives) where they are mentioned in relation to one single priority. Another problem with the counts of these indicators appears in Annex 3 (withdrawals of pending proposals), where the term “social security” is found twice, while on closer application it becomes clear that this actually is the opposite of attention for social policy, since it is about proposals that are withdrawn.

White Paper on Damages actions for breach of the EC antitrust rules

Date of publication	02-04-2008
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

This paper is related to economic policy. It focusses on ways in which citizens or companies that have suffered damage due to a breach of EU antitrust rules would be able to receive compensation. It mentions specific actions that would directly influence the current situation (such as “a more consistent application of Articles 81 and 82 by different national bodies” to increase “legal certainty”. This paper can, due to the direct connection to antitrust policy be seen as attention for economic policy.

Commission Legislative and Work Programme 2009. Acting now for a better Europe. Volume 1

Date of publication	05-11-2008
Terms related to social policy	Social inclusion
Terms related to economic policy	None

The first priority that is mentioned for 2009 is “growth and jobs”, indicating that economic policy and recovery would be the main priority. This is followed by “climate change and sustainable Europe”; “a Europe close to citizens”; “Europe as a world partner”; “better regulation”; and finally “communicating Europe”.

The part on growth and jobs is mostly about actions that should be taken in order to battle the problems caused by the financial crisis. There are, however, also mentions that make clear that this cannot be seen as purely economic policy: phrases like “at a time of economic distress and social pressure, it is more than ever important to advance the Social Agenda for Opportunities, Access and Solidarity” show that the Commission views social and economic policy as going hand in hand in this Work Programme. The brunt of this Work Programme, however, is about economic measures to be taken, without any notion of social policy connected to it.

White Paper: Adapting to climate change: towards a European framework for action

Date of publication	01-04-2009
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

This White Paper is meant to “set out a framework to reduce the EU’s vulnerability to the impact of climate change”. This goal itself is not directly related to economic or social policy, however some proposals made in this paper can have an influence on other policy fields. The paper talks about investing in a low-carbon economy, for example, which is linked to the European Economic Recovery Plan (EERP), meant to respond to the economic crisis to “lead us to a creative, knowledge based economy”. This means that this White Paper, although not directly related to economic policy after a first look, is indeed concerned with economic policy because of this link made by the Commission. This link is again expressed in the

chapter on financing. It should be clear that the economic crisis did have a noticeable effect on the contents of this paper, but on the other hand this influence should not be overstated, since most mentions of economic policy are references to the EERP, without in-depth economic policy proposals.

Commission Work Programme 2010. Time to act

Date of publication	31-03-2010
Terms related to social policy	Social exclusion, working conditions
Terms related to economic policy	Public finances

The effects of the economic crisis are clearly at the base of this Work Programme. In the introduction, the Commission states that it will act “along four main strands: tackling the crisis and sustaining Europe’s social market economy; building a citizen’s agenda which puts people at the heart of European action; developing an ambitious and coherent external agenda with global outreach; and modernising EU instruments and ways of working”. Recovering from the crisis is clearly the most important of these four in this programme, taking up at least one page of space more than the other three “strands”. The part on recovering from the crisis does actually contain some remarks on social policy, most notably combatting social exclusion and attempts to create better working conditions in the transport sector. Besides these few mentions of social policy, the largest part of this chapter on exiting the economic crisis is about economic policy initiatives such as “an industrial policy for a globalised era,” and the “Resource efficient Europe flagship initiative”.

In the rest of the Work Programme, however, more mentions of social policy can be found. A green paper on “the future of pensions” is announced, as is a proposal for a revision of the working time directive. It is clear, however, that the recovery from the economic (and because of that economic policy) crisis has gotten more attention in this working programme than social policy.

White Paper on Insurance Guarantee Schemes

Date of publication	12-07-2010
Terms related to social policy	None
Terms related to economic policy	None

As is stated in the paper itself, action on Insurance Guarantee Schemes (IGS) is needed because “although not at the root of the crisis the insurance sector has proved far from being immune”. This means that without the economic crisis this paper probably would not have been written, or at least not at that time. Next to that, this paper is about actions that should be taken in the economic policy field in order to protect consumers from having their claims not covered because of solvency problems of the insurance company. Social policy is not to be found anywhere in this paper.

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