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Work-related strain, technological change and the impact of pension law reforms on retirement age

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This article examines how pension reforms affect individuals in different occupations, particularly considering work-related strain and adaptation to technological change. The study reveals significant differences based on occupational characteristics that were examined. Insured persons in demanding jobs occupations are less likely to prolong their employment when early retirement options are cancelled and are more prone to unemployment. Conversely, when reforms allow for early retirement, insured persons in demanding jobs are more likely to take advantage of this option. Insured persons in occupations with intensive use of new technologies are better able to remain employed and face a lower risk of unemployment when early retirement options are no longer available. The results show that longer participation in the labour market is not equally feasible for all insured persons.

Protection against social risks: a unique challenge for hybrid workers?

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Hybrid employment, defined as simultaneous self-employment and dependent employment, has steadily increased over time. Due to differing social security systems for dependent employees and the self-employed, there is some concern that hybrid workers may not be adequately insured. This question is indirectly addressed by analysing the income levels and compositions of hybrid workers based on the taxpayer panel. The concern is largely unfounded, as hybrid workers are typically insured through their dependent employment, and no worse off than solely dependent employees. In addition, they often earn higher and more frequent additional income than dependent employees. However, a small, not precisely quantifiable portion of hybrid workers is poorly insured, although this is not inherently due to their hybrid employment status.

Cycles of Crisis. German old-age provision after the end of the "economic miracle" boom cycle

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This article reflects upon the interaction between economic crises and old-age provision in recent German history. From a historical perspective, two crisis cycles can be identified after the end of the boom phase, the so-called "economic miracle", both showing a strong resemblance to each other concerning the progression of events. The first cycle covers the period from the 1973 oil crisis to the pension reform of 1989, the second covers the period from German reunification to the pension system’s realignment after the turn of the millennium. Both crises began with a recession and a rise in unemployment, countered by an early retirement offensive. High unemployment rates and costs of early retirement led to a crisis in pension finances in both cycles. Politicians initially responded with a series of unsystematic attempts at consolidation and finally with major pension reforms (in 1989 and from 2001 to 2007). Both reforms were preceded by a shift in discourse, emphasizing that demographic ageing was the cause of the crisis, at the same time obscuring the fact that the pension crises were in fact, to a large extent, the result of political decisions.

Minimum income in old age: comparative aspects and European law issues

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The European Pillar of Social Rights emphasises in Principle 15 that "Everyone in old age has the right to resources that ensure living in dignity". Minimum old-age benefits can be an important safeguard, especially for those who have had a comparatively short occupational career or receive a low income. EU Member States have introduced various minimum income schemes for the elderly. This article provides a comparative overview of the options and types of benefits available in nine selected EU Member States to guarantee a minimum income for elderly people. The countries featured in this analysis are presented in the form of a typology. Remarks that follow are devoted to the common developments and trends that become apparent when comparing the design of minimum income schemes. On this basis the article discusses relevant questions and challenges under European law, in particular whether these benefits can be exported to other European countries and whether pensioners who move to another EU member state can apply for them in that state.

Austrian features in German pensions: individual benefits and economic costs

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This study examines the integration of Austrian pension system elements into the German statutory pension insurance scheme (GRV). Six hypotheses on the effects of the integration were tested using a microsimulation model based on RTBN data. The model applies the pension formula and calculates gross pensions. In half of the cases, the average gross pension would be increased, however, this would be accompanied by negative effects. Simulated pensions lead to both additional costs and financial relief for the statutory pension scheme which affect the contribution income or the tax subsidy from the federal budget. The results show that the Austrian pension system is more generous than the German system in some respects. Nevertheless, certain restrictions which are less generous than in Germany must also be considered.