

# PREFACE

BY **KOEN VLEMINCKX**

The late British historian *Tony Judt* famously claimed that the European social model “binds Europe together”<sup>1</sup>. The general outlines of a European social model emerged during the post-war boom. During that period many European countries modernized their social security system<sup>2</sup>, still a mainstay of the European social model. In several countries the names of their architects became household names: Britain’s William Beveridge, Belgium’s Achille Van Acker, France’s Pierre Laroque, Holland’s Willem Drees, ... .

However, these architects did not work in isolation. Even before the war, the international exchange of ideas concerning the development of social insurance programmes had played an important role in the development of social insurance programmes in Europe and on other continents. The International Social Security Association (ISSA), an international organization bringing together national social security administrations and agencies, was founded for this purpose in 1927<sup>3</sup>.

The BTSZ-RBSS, founded in 1954<sup>4</sup>, has always taken a keen interest in the international dimension of social security development. Already in its first issue, an article by Pierre Laroque was published on the subject of social security in France (1/1954). Throughout its existence, international comparisons were regularly published in the international section of the BTSZ-RBSS (Bouget, 1/2009:15). Since a couple of years a European digest is published in every issue, focussing on social security developments on a European level.

In order to promote the international dimension of social security development, the editorial board of the BTSZ-RBSS decided to start publishing an English-language issue each year. The present issue is the first.

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(1) Tony Judt, 2011, “Postwar: A history of Western Europe since 1945”, Vintage, 960 p.

(2) In December 2014, Belgium will celebrate the 70th anniversary of its social security system.

(3) William Franklin Willoughby’s cross-national study on “workingmen’s insurance” was even published as early as 1898.

(4) Vanaf 1959 wordt het BTSZ uitgegeven door Ministerie Sociale Zaken, momenteel de FOD Sociale Zekerheid.