

ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR WIRTSCHAFTSPOLITIK

58. Jahrgang
2009

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Herausgeber:
Juergen B. Donges
Johann Eekhoff
Christian Watrin

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Mannheim*

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ISSN: 0721-3808

Energieeffizienz – eine neue Aufgabe staatlicher Regulierung?

Bodo Sturm und Tim Mennel

Abstract

In the political debate, calls for regulation of energy efficiency are usually based on environmental or resource economic arguments. This paper analyses the case for energy efficiency regulation as a policy to curb excessive resource consumption, to protect the climate and to achieve energy security. The economic rationale for regulation on these grounds is market failure due to externalities and asymmetric information as well as intergenerational distributive justice. We show, however, that most instruments used in energy efficiency regulation, such as standards, subsidies and white certificates, do not meet the criterion of cost efficiency. Tradable emission permits and specific energy taxes are more effective in achieving the policy goals and less costly. Energy efficiency is shown to be a result, not a means of sound environmental and resource policy.

JEL-Classification: Q32, Q50, Q41

Diskretionäre rentenpolitische Maßnahmen und die Entwicklung des Rentenwerts in Deutschland von 2003-2008

Tim Krieger und Sven Stöwhase

Abstract

Within the last years, the development of the pension value (Rentenwert), which determines the size of public pension benefits in the German public pension system, was strongly affected by discretionary changes in the method of its calculation. The aim of the present study is to shed light on the influence of these changes. To do so, we calculate the pension value for a number of hypothetical scenarios on an ex-post basis and compare results with each other. The key issue of our analysis is to quantify the isolated effects of the components included in the 2004 Pension Reform Act. We provide results for both East and West Germany.

JEL-Classification: H55, J18, D63, D78

Wirtschaftspolitisches Forum

Wie hoch darf bzw. muss eine menschenwürdige Mindestsicherung in Deutschland sein?

Dr. Klaus Schrader

It is discussed whether the German system of social welfare benefits fulfils its essential targets: guarantee of a social minimum income and incentives to reintegrate into the labour market. The evidence is that living and social participation of the socially deprived are basically guaranteed. However, severe shortcomings exist with respect to incentives for the recipients of social welfare benefits to seek regular jobs. Calculations of the gap between potential earned income and the payments for the long-term unemployed (Arbeitslosengeld II) reveal serious disincentives to work for a considerable number of characteristic household types. It is referred to the most relevant policy blueprints discussed in Germany which offer feasible solutions for these incentive problems.

Steffen J. Roth

The author discusses how economists can imagine a pareto-superior decision to choose a tax-financed social minimal income. It is shown that therefore economists come back to the test of unanimity. Nevertheless, the author strictly argues against any shortfall of the guarantee of minimum income in favor of incentives to work. It is shown that the German system currently has some remarkable shortcomings, which should be amended. In order to avoid throwing out the baby with the bath water a serious means test has to be done by placement services, by following the principle that "Whoever can work must work" and by monitoring – not by overall cuttings of the social minimum income.

Dr. Rudolf Martens

What is being outlined, are the basic considerations as to how the limit for the minimum subsistence level (social welfare) is arrived at in the German welfare state. Currently the limit for persons who have been unemployed on the long term who are recipients of social welfare stands at Euro 351 for a single-person household plus housing costs (approximately Euro 650 - 750). For a long time the PARITÄTISCHE has criticised the social welfare limit as being insufficient. A further criticism has been that the limit does not fully take into account the needs of children. Thirdly, it criticises the annual increase in allocations, which up until now have remained below market trends. Based on its own calculations, it considers as imperative a social welfare standard that ought to be increased by 25 percent for adults (to Euro 440 plus housing costs), so that the cost of living can be covered. In conclusion, costs and the economic effects of meeting the demands of a minimum subsistence level are discussed. At the same time, it points out that the demands of a minimum subsistence level should be met. This is particularly important for people who are to a

large extent affected by the job market's globalisation and flexibilisation, which is forcing them to make do with poorly paid and uncertain employment conditions.

JEL-Klassifizierung: B 52, H 41, I 31, I 38, J 68

Zinsbereinigung des Eigenkapitals im internationalen Steuerwettbewerb – Eine kostengünstige Alternative zu „Thin Capitalization Rules“?

Dominik Rumpf, Würzburg

Abstract

This paper investigates the impact of an Allowance for Corporate Equity (ACE) on the expected tax revenues and on the international tax competition. Beginning with an analysis of the relation between the rate of return on equity and the interest rate on the capital market, this paper figures out some effects which cause surprisingly low net assets used to calculate the ACE. This yields to a strong impact on the financial structure of multicorporate enterprises although there is only a moderate decline in tax revenues. Focusing profit shifting via transfer prices, the ACE has no positive effect. Only a cut of the corporate tax rate is useful in this context. The relevance of these results is additionally affirmed by using the statistical data published by the "Deutsche Bundesbank", the central bank of Germany, which includes an aggregated corporate balance sheet.

All in all, the ACE can be seen as an alternative to the new German thin capitalization rules applied in 2008 ("Zinsschranke"). Additionally, the low tax revenue losses constitute a new advantage for the ACE as a blueprint for corporate tax reforms. This is also interesting because an ACE could reduce the negative effects on the financial structure of firms which accompanies the implementation of a low withholding tax on interests.

JEL Classification: G32, G38, H21, H25, H71, H73

Simulationsmodelle zur ex ante Evaluation von Steuerreformen

Andreas Peichl

Abstract

Microsimulation models (MSM) and Computable General Equilibrium models (CGE) have both been widely used in policy analysis. The combination of these two model types allows the utilization of the advantages of both types. The aim of this paper is to describe the state-of-the-art in simulation modeling and to demonstrate the

benefits of linking both model types modeling using a flat tax reform proposal for Germany.

JEL-Classification: D58, H24, J20