

## **Abstract**

The thesis deals with the pension system evolution in France. Its main objective is to provide the detailed description concerning the development of the French social security system especially focused on the social security for elderly people. The contemporary pension system is the result of the long evolution lasting for centuries. Despite the fact that it is also based on obligatory participation, a lot of differences can be found by comparison to the other European countries.

The system in France consists of several independent systems that are governed by different rules. This plurality finds its principal origin in the Napoleonic era when the first pension schemes for some specific professions have been settled. The variability of pension benefits for different groups of insured persons was the main cause why the concept of one uniform scheme for social insurance has failed after WW2.

The first decades after establishing the universal (but not uniform) social security system were characterized by the economic growth and by the exceptionally favourable demographic situation. The difficulties appeared in 70s when the slowdown of the economic growth had a negative impact on labour market. Governments seemed to be preparing the deep system reform to solve the social system revenue decline problem but the first modest reform was realized only in 1993.

The last twenty years are characterized by frequent reforms trying to reduce the aggregate pension debt and approximate the schemes. The debts amount varies in each schemes so that some of them have to receive state subventions to maintain the financial balance. For the reasons mentioned above the reforms extended the compulsory insurance period, settled the retirement age on 62 years and increased the tax level. Adopting reforms was accompanied by manifestations and strikes by trade unions which traditionally play an important role in the French social security system.

Nowadays the pension system in France is stabilized although performed reforms did not achieve the balance between the incomes and expenditure on pensions. France spends on pensions about 14 % of its GDP. The percentage is higher than the average in the European Union. According to the expert studies, without legal framework changes the system cannot reach the balance before 2037.

During the presidential campaign, Emmanuel Macron presented his intention to create one uniform pension scheme applicable on everybody. It means another attempt to remove all existing schemes and reach the total uniformity. This audacious attempt is worth to observe because it seems to be really difficult to adopt this essential reform under the rebellious atmosphere in the French society represented by the contemporary Yellow Vest movement. The bill should be submitted to the parliament on summer 2019.

The thesis is divided into an introduction, a conclusion and nine chapters which are chronologically ordered. It tracks the most important events in the pension system, describes them and tries to analyze its substantial issues. The pension system is evaluated in wider circumstances that are not omitted in this thesis, i. e. political and economic conditions.