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Social protection

W: Today's subject is about social protection. Europe has an extensive, expensive social safety net designed to feed and protect the most vulnerable sections of the population. What could you say about this?

Sarah: In France and in Britain the state tries to help people from the cradle to the grave. But with the greying of Europe, the burden on states' coffers will be heavier and heavier.

W: Indeed, and the enormous cost of social protection in Europe is a noose that is slowly strangling the economies of countries like France, Germany and Italy.

Sarah: Some think that the vast numbers of benefit scroungers can largely be explained by the generosity of welfare state. What is your opinion on that matter?

W: Well a sure fact is that social benefits are considered sacrosanct in France. In America the poor tend to be considered less as victims than as people responsible for their predicament.

Sarah: I don't agree with the last point. You can't impute to unemployment insurance beneficiaries the burden borne by welfare state. One reason health spending keeps rising is also a constant improvement of new medical technologies and treatments. But I recognize as well that unfortunately, some people think the state can fork out indefinitely and they expect everything to be handed to them on a plate.



GLOSSARY:

Social protection	Benefit scroungers
To design	The generosity
To feed	Welfare state
To protect	A matter
To try	A sure fact
To strangle	The poor
To explain	Less as victims
To tend to	Than as people responsible
To consider	Their predicament
To agree	Unemployment insurance
To impute	Beneficiaries
To bear/bore/borne	Health spending
To keep rising	A constant improvement
To recognize	New medical technologies
To fork out	Treatments
To expect	A plate
To hand to	Extensive
social safety net	Expensive
Sections of the population	The most vulnerable
From the cradle to the grave: <i>litt.</i>	Heavier and heavier
The greying	Slowly
The burden	Largely
States' coffers : les caisses des Etats	Sacrosanct
The enormous cost : le coût énorme	Indefinitely
A noose : un nœud coulant, étau	
The economies	
The vast numbers	



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