



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY & HEALTH



02.10.2009

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Tel. 2200 3300 Fax 2122 7580 Email: consult.meusac@gov.mt



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... from the Parliament

Transition to the 7th legislative term –

The European Parliament will take up many of the uncompleted legislative items from the previous Parliamentary term. In ten cases, however, the EP political group leaders have decided to ask the Commission to either withdraw the proposals or present fresh draft proposals to Parliament.

A thorough analysis of pending legislation

The committees, at the request of President Jerzy Buzek, have analysed all the unfinished legislative items from the last term, based on the contents of the dossiers and on the new political balance in Parliament. Their recommendations have now had final approval from the Conference of Presidents, which is made up of the EP President and the political group leaders. In all, some 200 dossiers were considered, at all various stages of the co-decision, consultation and assent procedures; this process is most significant for the 55 which had yet to come to a plenary vote in Parliament.

Ten proposals sent back

Ten legislative proposals, considered the Employment, Environment, Legal Affairs, Civil Liberties, Fisheries and Regional Development Committees, will be sent back to the Commission with a view to withdrawal or replacement (the link to the full list is found below). In addition, at the next plenary session, Parliament's agenda includes a proposal formally to reject a draft law on working time for persons with road transport activities.

If the Lisbon treaty comes into force, a further number of dossiers might be affected. In this case, the Commission would need to present modified proposals.

MEPs to follow up unheeded calls for new draft laws

The committees have also drawn up lists of subjects on which the previous Parliament called on the Commission to present legislative proposals but the Commission did not so far do so. These issues may well be raised during the hearings for the next team of Commissioners- designate.

[Business to be resumed](#)

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... Commission

GDP and beyond

COM (2009) 433 – COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT GDP and beyond Measuring progress in a changing world.

Gross Domestic Product has come to be regarded as an indicator for overall societal development and progress in general. However, by design and purpose, it cannot be relied upon to inform policy debates on all issues. For example, GDP does not measure environmental sustainability or social inclusion and these limitations need to be taken into account when using it in policy analysis and debates. To address this problem, the European Commission (together with the European Parliament, the Club of Rome, the WWF and the OECD) organised the Beyond GDP conference in November 2007. The conference revealed strong support from policymakers, economic, social and environmental experts and civil society for developing indicators that complement GDP and aim to provide more comprehensive information to support policy decisions.

This Communication identifies five actions that can be taken in the short to medium term. The five actions are:

1. **Complementing GDP with environmental and social indicators**
2. **Near real-time information for decision-making**
3. **More accurate reporting on distribution and inequalities**
4. **Developing a European Sustainable Development Scoreboard**
5. **Extending National Accounts to environmental and social issues**

The overall aim is to develop more inclusive indicators that provide a more reliable knowledge base for better public debate and policy-making. The Commission intends to cooperate with stakeholders and partners to develop indicators that are internationally recognised and implemented.

European Commission President's priorities

In a document presented to Parliament entitled: "Political guidelines for the next Commission", President Barroso sets out the objectives and ideas that he believes should inspire a political partnership between the Commission and the Parliament for the next five years.

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President Barroso said: "Europe is facing stark choices in today's interdependent world. Either we work together to rise to the challenges. Or we condemn ourselves to irrelevance. I will redouble my efforts to make an ambitious Europe happen. A Europe that puts people at the heart of the policy agenda and projects European values and interests in the world. A Europe that nurtures new sources of growth and drives forward smart regulation of sound markets that work for people. A Europe of freedom and solidarity."

President Barroso added: "I want to work closely with the Parliament for a prosperous, secure and sustainable Europe, which builds on the strengths of the enlarged EU's internal market, the euro and our European model of society."

Extracts from the text of the political guidelines

- On setting priorities in a longer term perspective: A vision for EU 2020

"We need to revise the current Lisbon strategy to fit the post 2010 period, turning it into a strategy for convergence and coordination to deliver on this integrated vision of EU 2020. This will require both immediate and longer term action:

- **Making a successful exit from the crisis;**
- **Leading on climate change;**
- **Developing new sources of sustainable growth and social cohesion;**
- **Advancing people's Europe;**
- **Opening a new era for Global Europe."**

- On making a successful exit from the crisis

"The priority now is to continue to sustain demand and stem the rise in unemployment. This means implementing the European Economic Recovery Programme with vigour, keeping interest rates low, and using our state aid rules to support governments in their efforts to revitalise the economy without adverse effects on other Member States. It is too early to withdraw these stimulus and support measures to the economy and the financial sector, but an exit strategy must be prepared."

"Under my leadership, the Commission will use the full range of possibilities in the Treaty to strengthen the convergence of objectives and the coherence of the effects of economic policy, particularly in the Euro area. Enhanced coordination will be central to a successful exit strategy."

"Europe must exit from the current crisis confident that it has a more ethical, robust and responsible financial system."

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- On leading on climate change

"The economic and financial crisis and the scientific evidence of climate change have shown us that we need to invest more in sustainability. But this is not just about doing the right thing for the future of the planet – Europe stands to benefit enormously from investing in new low carbon technologies for future jobs and growth. Fighting climate change and the move towards a low carbon economy provide huge opportunities for business and people and will enhance our energy security."

"First-mover advantages can be gained by exploiting the potential of EU environmentally-friendly industries, services and technology through fostering their uptake by enterprises, especially SMEs, and designing the appropriate regulatory environment. An industrial base which is modernised to use and produce environmental-friendly technologies and which exploits the potential for energy efficiency is the key to sustainable growth in Europe."

"The next Commission needs to maintain the momentum towards a low emission economy, and in particular towards decarbonising our electricity supply and the transport sector – all transport, including maritime transport and aviation, as well as the development of clean and electric cars."

- On boosting the new sources of growth and social cohesion

"We cannot rely forever on short-term stimulus. New sources of growth will have to take up the baton – sources of growth that are sustainable."

"In order to ensure that the EU exploits this potential for change and remains an attractive industrial location in 2020, we need a fresh approach to industrial policy, supporting industry, putting the emphasis on sustainability, innovation and the human skills needed to keep EU industry competitive in world markets. I am committed to a policy that continues to remove unnecessary administrative burdens and provide the legal certainty companies need to make the long term investments."

"The next Commission must take EU research policy to a new level and make it one of the motors of our sustainable development."

- On an employment agenda for a changing workplace

"We need to make sure that our values of inclusion, equity and social justice are carried forward into a new approach. We will not allow basic social rights, such as the right of association or the right to strike, to be undermined. They are fundamental to the European model of society. And if globalisation puts pressure on our competitiveness, our response should never be to lower our standards. Rather we need to make the case to other partners to



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adopt similar standards, in the interest of their own wellbeing, and to continue to advocate decent work and other standards in all parts of the world."

- On global markets

"Openness is critical to Europe's future competitiveness. This is not just a question of political preference. It is in our self-interest as the world's leading exporter."

"We need to join up the different strands of our external policy much better to use our "soft power" leverage to deliver solid results for EU businesses and for citizens. The European interest has to be protected and promoted in a coherent and determined way."

- On the networks of the future

"The next Commission will develop a European Digital Agenda (accompanied by a targeted legislative programme) to tackle the main obstacles to a genuine digital single market, promote investment in high-speed Internet and avert an unacceptable digital divide."

"One of the next great European projects is to give Europe a new European super-grid for electricity and gas."

- On opening a new era for Global Europe

"The Lisbon Treaty, if ratified, will give us the tools to open up a new era in the projection of European interests worldwide."

"I am committed to ensuring that the Commission, as the driver of so many key external policies, plays its full part in seizing the moment to give Europe the weight it deserves on the global stage. We must not see external relations today as a separate 'box', but as part and parcel of how we achieve our internal policy goals."

- On the means to match these ambitions

"This will require a root and branch reform of the EU budget."

"We should work more closely and imaginatively with the European Investment Bank and the private sector."

"The Commission will also propose a new framework for public-private partnerships to help bring different sources of funding together to maximise investment in the coming years."

[Full text of Barroso's political guidelines](#)

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Public consultation on Community innovation policy

The re-launched Lisbon Partnership for growth and jobs has put innovation and entrepreneurship at the centre and called for decisive and more coherent action by the Community and the Member States in view of mastering the shift towards knowledge based low carbon economy. On this basis, an ambitious European innovation policy has been launched in 2006 and the Small Business Act (SBA) has been agreed. Thanks to the partnership approach between the EU and its Member States progress can today be reported. Almost all Member States have improved their innovation performance. The innovation gap between the EU and its key competitors, the US and Japan, has narrowed. However, the Communication also recognises policy gaps and indicates areas where further improvements both at European and at Member States level are necessary. This analysis will feed into the preparation of the new European reform agenda beyond 2010.

(More details in ESPH Update 04.09.2009)

The Communication COM (2009) 442 - [Reviewing Community innovation policy in a changing world](#) presents an assessment of the achievements and shortcomings in implementing Community policies in support of innovation in recent years. Together with a series of more detailed [Commission staff working papers](#), it serves as an input to the preparation of a new European innovation plan, as called for by the European Council.

The objective is to put in place new ambitious policies to foster innovation in Europe. The new policy will be presented in the context of the forthcoming post-2010 Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs, taking into account the global economic crisis.

This public consultation seeks to follow up the findings of the referred Communication and two previous consultations, one on the effectiveness of innovation support in Europe and one on design as driver of user-centred innovation. It will explore new ways to address challenges for a better European innovation policy and collect information for the impact assessment report on the innovation plan. To this purpose, a list of questions has been prepared.

All interested stakeholders are invited to submit comments **by Monday 16 November 2009** to entr-innovation-policy-development@ec.europa.eu.

Background documents

[Public consultation - questions](#)

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Launch of the European Partnership for Action against Cancer

Three million people are diagnosed with cancer every year in the EU. It is the second biggest cause of death in both men and women. The Partnership aims to draw together relevant organisations to share expertise, to identify challenges in order to reduce the number of new cancer cases in the EU by 15% by 2020.

The Partnership aims to support countries in their efforts to tackle cancer by providing a framework for identifying and sharing information, capacity and expertise in cancer prevention and control. It aims to engage a wide range of stakeholders, including non governmental organisations, researchers, patients groups, industry and national authorities across the EU in a collective effort and with a common commitment to addressing cancer. This partnership approach will also help to avoid scattered actions and the duplication of efforts by contributing to better use of limited resources available.

The Commission [policy paper on Action against Cancer](#), adopted in June 2009 (see also ESPH Update 26.6.2009) sets out the aims, objectives and actions of the Partnership. After the launch event, preparatory meetings for the Partnership are planned later in the autumn. By the end of the Partnership, the objective is for all Member States to have integrated cancer plans. The long-term aim set out by the Commission Communication is to reduce cancer by 15% by 2020.

Background on EU action on Cancer

Since 1985, cancer has been a priority issue for EU public health policy. This priority has been reflected in three successive Europe against Cancer action programmes (1987 to 1989, 1990 to 1994, and 1996 to 2002)

In December 2003, the Council adopted a Recommendation on cancer screening, which sets out fundamental principles of best practice in the early detection of cancer, and invites all Member States to take common action to implement national population-based screening programmes for breast, cervical and colorectal cancer, with appropriate quality assurance at all levels. The Commission has published European guidelines for quality assurance in breast and cervical cancer screening and diagnosis, as benchmarks in this process. On 22nd December 2008, the Commission adopted its Report on the Implementation of the Council Recommendation on cancer screening.

[Speech](#) by Androulla Vassiliou Member of the European Commission, responsible for Health at the launch of the European Partnership against cancer Brussels, 29 September 2009.

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Report on the social dimension of the growth and jobs strategy

A new report published by the Commission says that the EU's strategy for growth and jobs must pay more attention to social cohesion goals in the future. The report from the Social Protection Committee – which brings together experts from each EU country – finds that social protection systems have helped shield Europeans from the worst effects of the financial crisis. But it concludes that social protection alone is not enough to prevent poverty and exclusion, calling for more emphasis on goals such as fighting child poverty and promoting active inclusion. Further modernisation of social protection needs to be fully articulated with growth and jobs strategies.

The report is a contribution to discussions on the future shape of the EU's Growth and Jobs Strategy and looks at the way economic, employment and social policies interact. It has been prepared by the EU Social Protection Committee (SPC), which brings together experts representing each Member State together with the European Commission. The report investigates the extent to which past economic and employment growth have contributed to greater social cohesion, as well as the extent to which the modernisation of social protection systems has supported this growth. The analysis was conducted by the SPC and its indicators sub-group and the Commission. The report was adopted by the SPC on 14 September 2009.

What is the main conclusion?

Over the past decade, economic and employment growth has in general improved overall living standards and governments have been able to devote more resources to social policy intervention. However, poverty remains a major issue in most countries and more needs to be done to ensure that labour markets are truly inclusive and that the jobs created provide for decent living standards. During this time, social protection systems across Europe have undergone a deep modernisation and they have played a decisive role in cushioning the social impact of the recent economic and financial crisis. However, further modernisation of social protection needs to be fully articulated with growth and jobs strategies.

Certain groups – such as the low skilled, lone parent and migrants – still face specific hurdles to the labour market such as poor access to enabling services, or poor design of benefits that create financial disincentives. At the same time, job quality remains a problem, and precarious forms of employment have contributed to persistently high levels of in-work poverty. Evidence shows that workers on temporary or involuntary part-time contracts are generally paid less per hour after controlling for differences in education and experience; and for many, these jobs are not stepping stones towards better jobs.

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As a response, active inclusion strategies are crucial, both to support the most vulnerable in the crisis and to limit losses to human capital and preserve future growth potential. Lessons from past experience show that addressing labour market segmentation and promoting job quality are both crucial.

In terms of social protection systems, recent reforms have improved their long-term financial sustainability but projections show that there are still challenges ahead. Efforts to modernise all functions of social protection should be sustained to ensure effective access to quality services for all, while contributing to the efficiency of public expenditure. Ensuring adequate and sustainable pensions will require further efforts to prolong working lives, which also means combating health inequalities.

The report also shows that Member States are in very different positions in terms of facing the social impacts of the crisis. In some countries, there are significant weaknesses in the social safety nets provided by social protection systems; others are faced with major public finance imbalances, leaving little room for manoeuvre in social policy; and some are better prepared to cushion the impact of the crisis but face questions about financial sustainability in the long run. Promoting labour market participation while improving the fairness, efficiency and effectiveness of social spending will be crucial for all countries, both in good and bad times. If social protection expenditure is to be effective as an automatic stabiliser in the economy, it has to increase in bad times (i.e. when unemployment is rising) and subsequently decrease when the economies recover.

The report is a contribution to the EU's reflections on its future strategy for growth and jobs in the period after 2010. EU leaders are due to adopt a new strategy next year covering the coming ten years.

Further information

Report by the Social Protection Committee on the post-2010 Lisbon Strategy and summary

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=596&furtherNews=yes>

Increased social cohesion, education and training systems to secure Europe's future

On 30 September 2009, the EESC plenary session debated employment and vocational training in the context of the financial crisis and endorsed a long term recovery framework. Commission President José Manuel Barroso addressed the discussion by stressing the need for governments and citizens to look beyond short term employment strategies and toward post-2010 sustainable growth.

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EESC president **Mario Sepi** confirmed unemployment as the most lingering effect of the crisis, "for banks the crisis is over, but the factory workers are still unemployed. They are the social capital of the EU and we need to help them." President **Sepi** also insisted on the re-launch of the Lisbon Strategy as the main way out of the crisis.

President **Barroso** concurred that, "for those who lost their jobs, the crisis is still there." However, he remains optimistic, "the economic crisis has been a huge challenge, but I am a fervent believer that in every difficulty lies an opportunity." He continued by stressing that strengthening social cohesion between the EU institutions would prevent further economic hardship, "we must work together or else we will be navigating in a sea where the EU is marginalized." Joint cooperation is not just a tool to keep the EU competitive, but "all citizens have a moral and political obligation to this problem," he pointed out.

Eva Uddén Sonnegård , the State Secretary in the Swedish Ministry of Employment, warned against the more latent, social effects of unemployment, "there is a risk that those becoming unemployed will give up and leave, therefore leading to their permanent exclusion in the labour force."

Bruno Coquet , President of the EU Employment Committee, commented on present recovery mechanisms, and observed the heterogeneity of the results between Member States. Therefore, he wished to introduce a flexible training system that many countries can respond to.

The EU is moving toward knowledge and skills-based occupations, as illustrated by the Director of CEDEFOP, **Aviana Maria Bulgarelli**. She therefore concluded that cultivating these future occupations would strengthen the EU's employment force.



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... Conferences



EUROPE AFTER IRELAND What Next?

9 October 2009 • 9am – 1.30pm
Westin Dragonara Hotel, St Julian's

Registration by Thursday 8 October
By email: info.meusac@gov.mt
By telephone: 2200 3300
Website: www.meusac.gov.mt



The proceedings of the Conference will be in Maltese and English. Translation into English will be provided.

JUM DINJI DWAR IS-SAĦĦA MENTALI 2009

Is-Saħħa Mentali: Sfida Ewropea: Sfida Lokali

Kelliema ewlenija

Ms. Hana Horka

Mill-Kummissjoni Ewropea

Temi diskussi

It-tfal, iż-żgħażaġh u l-edukazzjoni, l-anzjani, il-postijiet tax-xogħol,
il-prevenzjoni tad-dipressjoni u s-suwicidju, l-istigma u d-diskriminazzjoni

Il-Ġimgħa, 9 t'Ottubru 2009

08:30 – 16:00

Excelsior Hotel, Floriana

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