



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY & HEALTH



17.04.2009

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...background for the second ESPH sectoral committee meeting

Community programme for employment and solidarity - PROGRESS (2007-2013) -

The aim of the PROGRESS programme is to provide financial support for the implementation of the European Union's objectives in the field of employment and social affairs. It will thus contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy objectives. PROGRESS, the budget for which is 743 million, will finance analysis, mutual learning, awareness-raising and dissemination activities, as well as assistance for the main players over the period 2007-2013. The programme is divided into five sections corresponding to five main fields of activity: employment, social protection and inclusion, working conditions, diversity and combating discrimination, and equality between women and men.

Up to now, Community activities in the fields of employment, social inclusion and protection, promoting gender equality and the principle of non-discrimination have been supported by separate action programmes.

With a view to improving coherence and efficiency, the European Commission has proposed to group these subjects together in a single framework programme known as PROGRESS.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The programme has six objectives:

- to improve knowledge and understanding of the situation in the Member States through analysis, evaluation and close monitoring of policies;
- to support the development of statistical tools and methods and common indicators;
- to support and monitor the implementation of legislation and policy objectives;
- to promote networking, mutual learning, and the identification and dissemination of good practice at EU level;
- to make stakeholders and the general public aware of EU policies in the fields of employment, social protection and inclusion, working conditions, diversity and non-discrimination, and equality between men and women;
- to boost the capacity of the key EU networks to promote and support EU policies.

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STRUCTURE: FIELDS OF ACTIVITY AND TYPES OF ACTION

The programme is divided into the following five sections:

- employment;
- social protection and inclusion ;
- working conditions ;
- diversity and combating discrimination ;
- equality between women and men .

The programme has a list of operational objectives for each of the sections. For our purposes, the following are the main points about the underlined:

Diversity and combating discrimination

This section will support the effective implementation of the principle of non-discrimination and promote its mainstreaming in EU policies by:

- improving understanding of the discrimination situation, in particular through analyses and studies and the development of statistics and indicators, as well as assessing the impact of existing legislation, policies and practices;
- supporting the implementation of EU anti-discrimination legislation through reinforced monitoring, training of practitioners and networking amongst specialised bodies dealing with combating discrimination;
- raising awareness, disseminating information and promoting the debate about the main challenges and policy issues in relation to discrimination and the mainstreaming of anti-discrimination in EU policies;
- developing the ability of the main EU networks (e.g. of national experts or NGOs) to pursue the Union's policy objectives.

Gender equality

This section will support the effective implementation of the principle of gender equality and promote gender mainstreaming in EU policies by:

- improving the understanding of the situation in relation to gender equality issues and gender mainstreaming, in particular through analyses and studies and the development of statistics and indicators, as well as assessing the impact of existing legislation, policies and practices;
- supporting the implementation of EU gender equality legislation through reinforced monitoring, training of practitioners and networking amongst specialised equality bodies;

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- raising awareness, disseminating information and promoting debate about the main challenges and policy issues in relation to gender equality and gender mainstreaming;
- developing the ability of the main EU networks (e.g. of national experts or NGOs) to pursue the Union's policy objectives.

FINANCING

The budget proposed is €743 million for the period 2007-2013. The breakdown of funding between the different sections will comply with the following lower limits:

- Employment 23%
- Social protection and inclusion 30%
- Working conditions 10%
- Diversity and combating discrimination 23%
- Gender equality 12%.

The remaining 2% will be used to cover programme management expenses.

GENDER EQUALITY

COM (2009) 77 - REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS - Equality between women and men - 2009

This report addresses the challenges and the priorities for action for removing the barriers to women's and men's full participation in the labour market. It concentrates on the achievement of the Lisbon objectives, particularly where more jobs are not always resulting in better ones.

- Although the average of female employment is close to the Lisbon objective of 60%, there is quite a gap between individual percentages of different member states.
- Women are still more bound by family priorities than men and so they are more 'forced' to opt for part-time jobs than men.
- Though more women are succeeding in tertiary education, numbers still lack in certain fields of study, like engineering and I.T.

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- No progress was made as regards the occupational and sectoral segregation. Women employment is not increasing in sectors traditionally dominated by men, just as there is slow progress in the presence of women in the political field.

Actions

- To achieve gender equality and to reach the Lisbon objectives, the Commission promotes the achievement of a better reconciliation of work and family life. Policies include flexible working hours and maternity leave arrangements which are equal to men and women.
- Regular updating of data related to the above issues.
- Setting up of a European Institute for Gender Equality.
- Gender equality policies strengthen the EU's responses to the present economic slowdown.
- Affordable, accessible and quality care services for children, will allow more women to enter and remain in the labour market.
- The combating of gender stereotypes will continue to eliminate the unequal sharing between women and men of working time, income and family responsibility.
- Promotion of equal participation of women and men in decision-making positions.

The Commission invites the Council to urge the Member States to respond without delay to this report.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING – ROADMAP 2006-2010

The Roadmap for Equality between women and men outlined six priority areas for EU action on gender equality:

- Equal economic independence for women and men;
- Reconciliation of private and professional life;
- Equal representation in decision-making;
- Eradication of all forms of gender-based violence;
- Elimination of gender stereotypes;
- Promotion of gender equality in external and development policies.

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... from the Commission

Decent work for all – a European and global goal

The European Union supports the concept of decent work for all as a means of fighting poverty and social injustice both in Europe and across the world.

Awareness raising

In close cooperation with the ILO, the European Commission organises regional seminars with its delegations on employment and social protection issues. Seminars in Asia (12/2006) and Latin America (10/2007) have already taken place. For ACP countries (African, Caribbean and Pacific) a seminar will be held in June 2009. The seminars raise awareness about decent work challenges and show how the issue can be addressed in social cooperation programmes or by mainstreaming in non-social sectors.

Decent work, as defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO), is based on the idea that people have the right to productive employment that can be conducted in conditions of freedom, equality and security – and with human dignity.

Fundamental principles and rights at work, social protection, social dialogue and employment that provides a fair income all combine to make up the decent work concept. Gender equality is also part-and-parcel of the decent work approach.

Europe's commitment

In 2006, the European Commission published a Communication on the subject, which commits the EU to promote decent work in its internal and external policies, especially in areas such as economic development, trade, external relations and enlargement.

The Communication called on other EU institutions, Member States and social partners to work together to promote decent work for all. Every European institution has endorsed the Communication.

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The Commission's Renewed Social Agenda further stresses the importance of the decent work concept. Together with this agenda, the Commission published a comprehensive report in July 2008 that shows the progress made on this issue since 2006 and which outlines the way forward.

So what kind of progress has the EU made in this area? The Community's legislation covering employment, social policy and equal opportunities already goes well beyond international norms.

What is more, the EU's Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs and its renewed social agenda provide frameworks for action in favour of developing good quality jobs in Europe.

In fact the EU has a basket of internal policies and actions that can help Member States and other partners pursue the decent work agenda. An example is flexicurity, which aims to balance labour market flexibility with greater social protection for workers.

A new Community strategy on health and safety at work highlights the EU's interest in raising standards for labour – both within and outside the Union.

In addition, a framework is now in place to protect workers in the EU from violence and harassment at work. And the Commission's roadmap for equality between men and women for 2006-10 aims to bring change to the EU and its candidate countries.

Those countries going through the accession process will also have to align themselves with EU practices relating to workers' rights and social protection as they adopt Community law and improve their institutional capacities.

A global issue

The EU promotes improving social standards and decent work through its trade policy, especially by providing unilateral incentives via the recently renewed System of Generalized Preferences, and when negotiating economic partnership agreements and free trade agreements with third countries.

The EU also promotes full and productive employment in its external assistance and development policies. Along with the UN, it sees these issues as key to relieving poverty, generating sustainable growth and stimulating a more

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equitable globalisation process. The Millennium Development Goals include free and productive employment and decent work as targets.

All 27 EU Member States have ratified the eight ILO conventions that provide the so-called core labour standards and which address forced labour, child labour, antidiscrimination, freedom of association and collective bargaining.

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... from the Parliament

WORKING TIME DIRECTIVE – latest news

The EP and the Council representatives seem to have made a step forward yesterday, though it is not yet clear if an agreement could be reached. The discussions focused mainly on the 'opt out' clause and on the exact treatment of 'on call' time (an issue which concerns mainly medical staff).

A final conciliation meeting is programmed for 27th and 28th April. However, the representatives will have a pre-meeting session on the 23rd April, since this will be the last effort to save the Directive.

The conciliation committee has until 28th April to reach an overall agreement.

The Parliament will still re-consider the outcome of the procedure in its last plenary session in May before the June elections.

... from the Sectoral Committees

New SKILLS for new JOBS

The Education, Youth & Culture sectoral committee meeting held on 3rd April discussed the issue of 'Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs' and of 'An updated strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training'.

Ms Kirsten Miller from the National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE), delivered a presentation on the first item by giving an overview of the results of a report issued by NCHE on the matter. The respective document of the Commission may be accessed through [COM \(2008\) 868](#). Among the issues raised at the meeting, there was the importance of investing in 'green' jobs, in highly-skilled workers, in re-training and skills diversification. The outcome of the report and of the discussion that followed during the meeting will be passed on to the respective government officials.

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The second item on the agenda was presented by Mr Paul Attard, Policy Advisor at the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth & Sport. He spoke about [COM \(2008\) 865](#), basically on how education and training must go hand in hand to cater in the best way for tomorrow's job market demands and for the implementation of the Lisbon strategy. This issue is much more essential at present if we are to tackle and emerge in a healthy way out of the present crisis. Mr Attard said that while in such a situation, governments try to cut expenditure in various sectors, this must never happen in the area of education and training.

HUMAN RESOURCES AND THE MARITIME STRATEGY

The implementation of the ILO (International Labour Organisation) 2006 Maritime Labour Convention is being considered by the Commission as an EU priority. Not all Member States within the EU are signatories to this convention, so the Commission is pushing to make it applicable across the board.

Some of the issues raised by members of the Transport, Telecommunications & Energy Sectoral Committee were the following:

- the conditions of seafarers from Europe to seafarers coming from abroad such as the Philippines and whether these had the same rights. Mr. Charles Abela (Malta Maritime Authority) who delivered a presentation on the subject, answered that all the conditions are contained in the Maritime Labour Convention of the ILO which are internationally acceptable. Every vessel arriving to a country that is signatory to this convention is subject to inspection to guarantee that the right working conditions of seafarers are satisfied. In Malta, port-control inspections are held to ensure that vessels entering our ports are complying with the established rules of the convention
- Another issue raised was that of the lack of professional engineers locally. A member asked why the local university never offered courses of professional maritime engineering. Mr Charles Abela replied that although he was not aware of such courses, there were already courses offering subjects related to transport and he will take note of the suggestion to cover maritime transport and forward it to the competent authorities.

Sectoral committee members interested in having the

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power-point presentations which were presented at the meetings may contact joe.a.sciberras@gov.mt.

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... talk

Il-Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Familja
tistieden lill-imsieħba soċjali u lill-pubbliku għal Seminar ta' diskussjoni dwar

**L-Impatt tal-Legizlazzjoni ta' I-UE
fuq il-Liġi Maltija tal-Familja**

Taħdita minn
Dr Ruth Farrugia LL.D., M.Phil., Adv.Trib.Eccle.Melit.
Lekċer fil-Fakultà tal-Liġi, Università ta' Malta
awtrici tal-tieni monografija bl-istess isem ippubblikata mill-Kummissjoni

Replika minn
L-Imħallef Giovanni Bonello,
Membri tal-Qorti Ewropea għad-Drittijiet tal-Bniedem

Nhar il-Ġimgħa l-24 ta' April 2009 bejn l-4.00 p.m. u s-6.00 p.m.
Fiċ-Ċentru Mediterran tal-Konferenzi
Sala Robert Bruce

Jiftaħ is-Seminar l-Onor. John Dalli, Ministru għall-Politika Soċjali.

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Have a look
at other Sectoral Committees' UPDATES

Click on

<http://www.meusac.gov.mt/fme/401/Default.aspx>

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... *publication*

SOCIAL AGENDA

The European Commission's magazine on Employment and Social Affairs

- *A magazine providing information on European employment and social policies –*

*Published by the European Commission's Directorate-General for
Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities*

Subscription is free on request
Contact Info Centre, B-1049 Brussels
e-mail: empl-info@ec.europa.eu

(Click [here](#) to have a look at issue number 18)

The latest issue (number 20 of March 2009), contains features about Employment, Health & Safety and Demography and an article on how the European Social Fund has teamed up with the French region of Lower Normandy to give over-50's who want to continue working the opportunity to do so by upgrading their skills and increasing their employability.

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