



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

# EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY & HEALTH

Sectoral Committee

Weekly Update

**13.08.10**



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## ... Commission

### Nuclear medicine, radiology and radiotherapy

COM 423 (2010) COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL on medical applications of ionizing radiation and security of supply of radioisotopes for nuclear medicine.

[http://ec.europa.eu/energy/nuclear/radiation\\_protection/radiation\\_protection\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/nuclear/radiation_protection/radiation_protection_en.htm)

In this communication, the Commission makes proposals to resolve the urgent issue of the shortage of supply of radioisotopes where nuclear medicine is practised for the diagnosis and treatment of patients. The Communication also identifies key issues to improve radiation protection of patients and medical staff and to avoid an increase of accidental or unintended exposures in radiotherapy.

All over the world, the number of X-ray examinations is around 4 billion per year. In Europe, around 9 million patients are treated each year with radioisotopes. It is the Commission's responsibility to help secure the availability of this technology to the benefit of human health.

Within the overall nuclear energy policy of the European Commission it is of crucial importance to provide incentives for further research reactors to contribute to its production and in the long term for new research reactors to be built for this purpose.

The Communication proposes a long-term perspective on the medical application of ionizing radiation in the Union to stimulate discussions on the necessary actions, resources and distribution of responsibilities.

The following actions are proposed:

- **Strengthen the existing regulatory framework.** This will be part of an overall consolidation of radiation protection legislation in 2011.
- **Raise awareness and safety culture.** The medical profession must receive adequate training and regular updates on good practice, and above all, made sensitive to its responsibility in ensuring both good medical care and adequate radiation protection. Awareness also needs to be raised among patients and among the general population.
- **Foster radiation protection and a sustainable supply and use of radioisotopes through research.**
- **Financing mechanisms to ensure sustainable supply of radioisotopes.**
- **Integration of policies.** Medical applications of ionizing radiation call for good integration of different policies, on public health, research, trade and industry as well as radiation protection.
- **International cooperation:** The Commission will support all initiatives for coordinated efforts between active organisations in the field.



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## **Self-employed workers to gain maternity and pension benefits**

**The new Council Directive on self-employed workers and assisting spouses (Directive 2010/41/EU) repeals and replaces an earlier law (Directive 86/613/EEC) and improves the social protection rights of self-employed workers and their partners – including the right to maternity leave for the first time.**

The new legislation considerably improves the protection of female self-employed workers and assisting spouses or life partners of self-employed workers, particularly also in case of maternity. They are granted a maternity allowance and a leave of at least 14 weeks, should they choose to take it.

The new rules also serve to encourage entrepreneurship in general and among women in particular. There is a currently a major gender gap in this area – only 30% of entrepreneurs in Europe are women.

The provision on social protection for assisting spouses and life partners (recognised as such in national law) is also a considerable improvement from the 1986 Directive. They will have the right to social security coverage (such as pensions) on an equal basis as formal self-employed workers, if the Member State offers such protection to self-employed workers.

EU Member States now have to introduce the Directive into their national laws within two years. Those Member States who still have to implement the provisions on assisting spouses may have this period extended to a further two years, only when there are particular difficulties in their implementation.

### **Directives on equal treatment between self-employed men and women**

#### **Directive 2010/41/EU**

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:180:0001:0006:EN:PDF>

#### **Directive 86/613/EEC**

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31986L0613:EN:HTML>



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## Social Agenda Publication Nr 24 – Promoting Roma Inclusion

[http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=737&langId=en&pubId=550  
&furtherPubs=yes](http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=737&langId=en&pubId=550&furtherPubs=yes)

### *... Eurobarometer*

#### Special Eurobarometer survey on humanitarian aid

A special Eurobarometer survey on humanitarian aid reveals a high level of solidarity among EU citizens with victims of conflict and natural disasters outside the Union. Eight out of ten citizens (79%) think it is important that the EU funds humanitarian aid outside its borders. However, the financial and economic crisis has taken its toll as the approval rate dropped 9% from 88% in 2006 when the last survey was carried out. There is a clear link between this decrease and the individual financial situation of citizens; those who have problems paying their bills expressed less support. At the same time, there is a strong endorsement of the Commission's mandate to provide relief aid, undertaken through its humanitarian aid and civil protection department (ECHO). An overall majority of EU citizens (58%), and a relative majority in all Member States, think that humanitarian aid is more efficient when provided by the EU through the European Commission. Around one quarter (24%) would prefer that relief funds be channelled through Member States.

The survey looked at four major issues:

1. Importance of EU humanitarian aid activities for EU citizens;
2. Awareness of humanitarian aid and the actors in this domain;
3. Knowledge and information on EU humanitarian aid activities;
4. Common or national approach to humanitarian aid.

The survey

[http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/eb\\_special\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb_special_en.htm)



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## **... Eurostat**

### **Labour Force Survey Employment rate in the EU27 fell to 64.6% in 2009 Rate for older workers up to 46.0%**

The total employment rate for people aged 15-64 in the EU27 rose steadily from 62.4% in 2002 to 65.9% in 2008, but fell to 64.6% in 2009. The employment rate for women, which increased continuously from 53.7% in 2000 to 59.1% in 2008, dropped for the first time in 2009 to 58.6%. In contrast, the rate for older people, i.e. those aged 55-64, has continued to grow, reaching 46.0% in 2009, compared with 36.9% in 2000 and 45.6% in 2008.

In 2009, 217.8 million resident persons in the EU27 aged 15 years or more had a job or a business activity.

In all Member States the male employment rate was higher than the female rate in 2009, except for Lithuania, where the female rate was 1 percentage point higher than that for men, and Latvia, where the rates were nearly equal. Apart from these Member States, Estonia and Finland recorded the smallest differences between male and female employment rates, while Malta, Greece and Italy recorded the greatest.

The employment rate for those aged 55-64 was highest in 2009 in Sweden (70.0%), Estonia (60.4%), Denmark and the United Kingdom (both 57.5%) and Germany (56.2%). It was lowest in Malta (28.1%), Poland (32.3%) and Hungary (32.8%).

#### **Full report**

**[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_PUBLIC/3-04082010-BP/EN/3-04082010-BP-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-04082010-BP/EN/3-04082010-BP-EN.PDF)**