



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY & HEALTH

Sectoral Committee

Weekly Update

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... Council presidency



Informal EPSCO Council Employment and the new economic governance

The Informal Council of European Employment and Social Affairs Ministers, which took place in Brussels on 8 July, focused primarily on employment within the Europe 2020 Strategy.

The ministers agreed that it is vital to place employment at the heart of the Europe 2020 Strategy and its mechanisms of governance by formally integrating the EPSCO Council and adapting its work to the schedule of the Belgian presidency of the Council. They expressed their hopes that employment recommendations become an integral part of each Member State's global economic recommendations.

EU Council President, Herman Van Rompuy attended the Council and emphasized that only employment growth could lead Europe out of the current crisis. He agreed that the EPSCO Council should play a greater role in the future economic governance, that coordination with ECOFIN was indispensable and that the articulation between macroeconomic and thematic surveillance mechanisms has to be reconsidered.

The ministers also discussed the outlines of new strategies to be implemented in order to tackle new challenges linked to employment policies, namely:

- Demographic change: increasing and reorganising participation in the labour market and anticipating white job creation; and
- Policies linked to climate change: green jobs are a major and indispensable driving force for a successful transition to a competitive low carbon economy.

Informal meeting of Ministers for Health

This meeting, held on 5/6 July in Brussels, discussed several important topics including the European Union's action and cooperation on cancer, a discussion on the lessons learnt from the H1N1 pandemic as well as recommendations for dealing with future pandemics in a more effective and harmonised manner, measures on information to patients receiving medicines and measures to improve the EU and member states' preparedness to combat health threats.

Of particular relevance was Malta's position in fighting the battle against cancer, where it indicated its support for an EU wide initiative to coordinate the cancer plans of each member state and in creating a common information and research platform to deal with cancer. Malta outlined its plan to launch a national cancer plan later on this year and is



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currently reviewing its curative and preventative strategies to reduce the burden of this disease.

Malta also reiterated its support for a more coordinated EU wide approach in pandemic planning and in forming a common front in discussions with the pharmaceutical industry for the future procurement and dissemination of vaccines and anti-viral drugs. It also explained how the media plays an important role and how all member states should act in a congruent and consistent manner in providing information in a timely and accurate manner to the public.

With regards to the proposed amendment of the Directive and Regulation on information to the general public on medicinal products, Malta reiterated its position that whilst it supports the proposal to provide more objective and impartial information to the public using medicinal products, it is nonetheless important to focus upon the rights and interests of patients and less upon the marketing of these products by the industry.

... Parliament

Unemployment of young people

In a resolution on improving access to the labour market for young people, MEPs made four proposals to ensure the employability of young people.

European Youth Guarantee

Parliament is proposing that the Council and Commission devise a "European Youth Guarantee" to give every young person in the EU the right to a job, an apprenticeship, further training or a job combined with training, if they have been out of work for four months.

European Quality Charter on Traineeships

The resolution emphasises that traineeships are part of an education and must not replace real jobs. MEPs called the Commission and Council to set up a European Quality Charter on Traineeships to ensure their educational value and avoid exploitation.

Decent income

MEPs called on Member States to guarantee young people a decent income so they can be financially independent. Parliament says some national laws could be seen as discriminatory, as they prevent young people from being financially independent.

European Social Fund

MEPs also called on the Commission to earmark a minimum of 10% of the European Social Fund for projects targeting young people in order to ease access to the fund.



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Equal rights for part-time and contract workers

Another resolution adopted by Parliament at its plenary session last week states that any reform of labour law should seek to protect workers in part-time or temporary work, and make it easier to move between various types of work and unemployment. It also states that most jobs should be based on indefinite contracts and national governments should implement "flexicurity" in a fairer and more balanced way.

MEPs called on the Commission and national governments to tackle the situation of the "outsiders" (employees with atypical or "very atypical" contracts) and to ensure that their rights and social-protection requirements are balanced with those of the "insiders". They emphasise that most jobs should continue to be based on contracts of indefinite duration.

Parliament also called on the Member States to put in place a more balanced and fair implementation of flexicurity principles and stresses that flexicurity cannot function properly without strong social protection.

... Commission

Public debate on the future of pensions

COM (2010) 365 GREEN PAPER towards adequate, sustainable and safe European pension systems.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0365:FIN:EN:PDF>

The European Commission has launched a Europe-wide public debate on how to ensure adequate, sustainable and safe pensions and how the EU can best support the national efforts. Ageing populations in all Member States have put existing retirement systems under massive strain and the financial and economic crisis has only increased this pressure. The consultation document, a Green paper, poses a series of questions inviting all interested parties to contribute views, opinions and ideas on confronting the pension challenge - one of the biggest facing Europe and most parts of the world – and how the EU can contribute to the solutions.

Currently in the EU there are four working-age people (15-64) for every person 65 or over. By 2060, there will be only two. For EU governments, the shrinking working-age population poses a double challenge: less revenue for public pensions and more retired people to support.

The Green Paper reviews the European pension framework in a holistic and integrated manner, benefiting from synergies across economic and social policy and financial market



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regulation which is why so many different topics are covered, such as: longer working lives, the internal market for pensions, mobility of pensions across the EU, gaps in EU regulation, the future solvency regime for pension funds, the risk of employer insolvency, informed decision-making and governance at EU level.

In particular, it aims to address the following issues:

- Ensuring adequate incomes in retirement and making sure pension systems are sustainable in the long term;
- Achieving the right balance between work and retirement and facilitating a longer active life;
- Removing obstacles to people who work in different EU countries and to the internal market for retirement products;
- Making pensions safer in the wake of the recent economic crisis, both now and in the longer term;
- Making sure pensions are more transparent so that people can take informed decisions about their own retirement income.

The deadline for feedback on the Green Paper is 15 November and can be submitted through: <http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form=pensions>

Green Paper and Commission Staff Working Document:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=839&furtherNews=yes>

Department of Information press release

<http://www.doi.gov.mt/EN/press%5Freleases/2010/07/pr1270.asp>

This Green Paper will be discussed at the next meeting of the Core Group and that of the ESPH sectoral committee. Further details on this meeting will be sent at a later stage.

Communication on the free movement of workers

COM (2010) 373 COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Reaffirming the free movement of workers: rights and major developments.

This Communication offers an updated picture of the rights of EU migrant workers, taking into account legal developments over the past decade. It clarifies the impact of a series of judgements by the EU Court of Justice and how they apply to these rights. At the same time, it aims to raise awareness of the rights of migrant workers.



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The right of workers to free movement still needs to be improved in practice. Following the presentation of the Monti report (*link below*) the European Commission aims to work on facilitating and promoting intra-EU mobility in the context of the new strategy for the single market.

Eurobarometer survey on geographical and labour market mobility

According to this Eurobarometer survey, 17% of Europeans envisage working abroad in the future and 48% would consider looking for work in another country or region if they were to lose their job.

The survey found that:

- Most Europeans think moving countries or regions is good for EU integration, half think it's good for the economy, labour market and individuals, but fewer think it's good for families.
- 10% of Europeans say they have lived abroad for work either within or outside the EU at some point in their lives, while 13% have done so for education and training. 41% know a friend or relative who has either worked or studied abroad.
- 17% of Europeans envisage working abroad in the future, ranging from 51% in Denmark to just 4% in Italy. 34% of Europeans rate the chances of finding a job abroad better than at home.
- Unemployment is a powerful reason to move: 48% of Europeans would consider moving regions or countries for work if they lost their job.

Eurobarometer survey report (summary)

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_337_sum_en.pdf

The Monti report

http://ec.europa.eu/bepa/pdf/monti_report_final_10_05_2010_en.pdf

Proposals for directives regarding third country workers Common entry and residence conditions for third country seasonal work Intra-corporate temporary transfer of non-EU skilled workers

The European Commission proposed 2 new directives to establish a common framework for conditions of entry and stay for two types of workers: seasonal workers and so called intra-corporate transferees.

COM (2010) 378 Proposal for a DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals in the framework of an intra-corporate transfer.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0378:FIN:EN:PDF>



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Seasonal workers are workers from non-EU countries coming to EU Member States to work for a shorter period of time in season-driven sectors such as agriculture, horticulture and tourism. With the present regulations, this type of temporary workforce is often subject to exploitation and to conditions that put their health and safety in danger.

In particular, the proposal:

- establishes a simpler entry procedure for the admission of non-EU seasonal workers based on common definitions and criteria, such as the existence of a work contract or a binding job offer that specifies a salary;
- sets a standard seasonal work time limit throughout the EU (6 months per calendar year);
- provides for a multi-seasonal permit for three years or a facilitated re-entry procedure in subsequent seasons;
- defines legal provisions applicable to working conditions of seasonal workers;
- entitles seasonal workers to equal treatment with nationals of the Member States in determined fields (freedom of association and affiliation, social security schemes, income-related acquired statutory pensions, access to goods and services, etc);
- leaves it up to the Member States to apply a labour market test and to decide how many seasonal workers they admit; the proposal does not create a right to admission.

COM (2010) 379 Proposal for a DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of seasonal employment.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0379:FIN:EN:PDF>

A quite different type of non-EU workers is called intra-corporate transferees. They are key personnel in multinational companies who get transferred on a temporary basis to a branch or subsidiary of their own company in an EU Member State. Up until now, businesses have been facing an array of 27 sets of rules and regulations and often lengthy procedures to manage this type of transfers. With this proposal, companies would get access to the right people with the right skills at the right time, while the intra-corporate transferees themselves would get more attractive residence conditions, more flexible rules for bringing their families to Europe, a clear legal status and they would more easily be able to move in between Member States if that is required for carrying out their work.

In particular, the Commission proposes to:

- create a common set of rules for a new fast-track entry procedure (30 days time-limit, combined residence/work permit) for a targeted group of highly specialised staff ('manager', 'specialist' and 'graduate trainee') from non-EU countries.
- establish more attractive residence conditions for these staff and their families and an easier system for non-EU transferees to facilitate their mobility within the EU.