



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY & HEALTH

Sectoral Committee

Weekly Update

21.05.10



Contents

1. Council

- **Informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for Disability**

2. Commission

- **Monthly Labour Market Monitor – May 2010**
- **Health-EU Newsletter (Issue 50)**

3. Parliament

- **Organ Donations and Transplants**
- **Universities and Industry**



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

...Council

Informal meeting of European ministers responsible for disability EU seeks rapid ratification of the UN Disability Convention Europe to choose “European capital of accessibility”

Ministers met in Zaragoza this week to discuss the EU's implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and provide input for a new European Disability Strategy. The informal meeting addressed one of the objectives set by the Spanish Presidency of the EU, that is, to allow disabled people to have their rights acknowledged.

The UN Convention aims at protecting and ensuring the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities. European Commission Vice-President Viviane Reding urged EU Member States to swiftly ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. She told EU Ministers in charge of disability policies that the EU must show leadership to ensure that people with disabilities are fully integrated into the economy and enjoy equal rights.

This yearly informal ministerial meeting on disability provides a platform for examining the state of play in implementing the UN Convention. A report from the EU Disability High Level group provided further input for the meeting. The Council agreed on a Code of Conduct so that the Convention can enter into force in the EU. The Commission urged Member States to adopt the Code and ratify the Convention.

The Commission is committed to implement the Convention through concrete actions in various policy fields. These actions will be set out in a new European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 to be published in autumn. Active inclusion of people with disabilities is part of the Europe 2020 Strategy and will help meet the 75% employment target endorsed by EU leaders. The right policy framework can also benefit businesses through better employee recruitment from a wider pool of high quality workers, improved corporate image, further innovation and more marketing opportunities for services and equipment for disabled people.

On the initiative of the Spanish Presidency of the EU, the European Commission is to launch a project to promote accessibility in cities. The minister stated that this project would use an assessment system similar to the one used for evaluating the quality of beaches, in that every city will receive a score based on its accessibility, and the city that scores highest will be declared the European city of accessibility.

According to the selection system, every country will be able to put forward a maximum of three candidate cities, with the degree of accessibility to be quantified on the grounds of four criteria:



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

- The condition of buildings and public spaces.
- Transport and infrastructure.
- Information and communications (including new technologies).
- Services open to the public.

The award will be given in December 2010.

...Commission

Monthly Labour Market monitor May 2010



The labour market in the EU is showing signs of stabilizing, following several months of more moderate deterioration. This is evidenced by rises in the unemployment rate easing further in most Member States in March, while in 10 countries the rate stabilized or even declined.

The EU economy started to recover from deep recession nine months ago, however it may take more time yet before the fragile pick-up in economic activity and confidence feed through more strongly to the labour market. Indeed, employment is expected to contract by 0.9 % for the year as a whole - according to the latest European Commission spring economic forecasts.

In this issue, the focus is on the labour market situations in Greece, Portugal and Spain but also in Bulgaria, Ireland, Poland and Romania.

This month's edition also focuses on recent developments in the non-metallic materials sector.

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=798&furtherNews=yes>

Health-EU Newsletter Issue 50

**World Multiple Sclerosis Day
26 May 2010**

http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/newsletter/50/newsletter_en.htm



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

... Parliament

Organ donations and transplants

In the plenary session of the European Parliament this week, MEPs approved a draft directive on quality and safety standards for human organs used for transplants. The directive covers all stages of the chain from donation to transplantation and provides for cooperation between Member States. This approval means that people needing organ transplants should face shorter waiting times after. MEPs also adopted a resolution on an Action Plan for organ donation.

One of the next steps by Member States is to designate the competent authority in each country responsible for quality and safety standards. These authorities will have to establish rules for all stages from donation to transplantation or disposal, based on the standards laid down in the directive.

The authorities will approve procurement organisations and transplant centres, set up reporting and management systems for serious adverse reactions, collect data on the outcome of transplants and supervise organ swaps with other Member States and third countries. Traceability from donor to patient and vice-versa will be part of the system, while confidentiality and data security will be ensured.

Cooperation between Member States

To ease cooperation, the Commission will set up a network of authorities and lay down procedures to transmit information between Member States. Governments may also set up agreements with European organ exchange organisations.

Member States will have to transpose the directive within two years of its entry into force.

Action Plan on Organ Donation and Transplantation (2009-2015)

In a separate resolution, MEPs approved a Commission Action Plan on organ donation and stress that appointing transplant donor co-ordinators in each hospital and swapping information and best practice will help countries with low organ availability to improve their donation rates.

MEPs urged Member States to consider enabling citizens to join a donor register when applying for a passport or driving licence and to include references on their national ID cards or driving licences identifying them as organ donors. Member States should consider offering on-line enrolment in national and European donors' registers and MEPs want the Commission to look into developing a system whereby the wishes expressed by citizens are taken into account in as many Member States as possible.



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

MEPs call for closer ties between universities and industry

A resolution adopted by the European Parliament claims that links between businesses and the academic world need to be strengthened but higher education institutions must retain their autonomy and public support.

MEPs called on companies to step up their support for young talented people by providing scholarships. It also suggests establishing a European Industrial PhD Scheme co-financed by the EU. At the same time, MEPs advocate "securing small and medium-sized enterprises access to university education and research both by increasing public funding and by simplifying bureaucracy".

Curriculum reform

European universities are urged to undertake innovative, far-reaching and methodical curricular reform. MEPs propose the following up of young graduates more closely in order to assess the economic and social usefulness of education programmes and the promotion of a culture of entrepreneurship into curricula at all levels of education, beginning with primary schools.

More mobility

The resolution says that mobility between countries as well as between universities and businesses is a key to achieving closer cooperation between them. MEPs ask the Commission to propose a legal framework for this purpose. They encourage widespread provision of student work placements and point to the importance for mobility of language learning.

Life-long and experimental learning

Reiterating that there is no longer any such thing as a 'job for life', MEPs point out:

- the need to match lifelong learning opportunities as closely as possible to the needs of individuals, of vulnerable social groups and of the labour market;
- bearing in mind the ageing population of Europe, universities should broaden access to their study programmes; and
- further development should be addressed in experimental, distance, electronic and blended forms of learning.