



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY & HEALTH

Sectoral Committee

Weekly Update

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... European Council

European Council adopts EU2020 Strategy

The European Council (which is made up of the 27 heads of state or government, its President Mr van Rompuy, and the President of the Commission, Mr Barroso) met in Brussels yesterday whereby they adopted the following conclusions:

- **Adoption of "Europe 2020".** The 27 heads of state or government adopted the Europe 2020 Strategy, the framework that will enable the Union to mobilise all its instruments and policies, and enable the member states to act with greater coordination, promoting structural reforms and unblocking the potential for growth. The emphasis must now be on its implementation and monitoring. The strategy sets out a series of objectives for the next ten years, such as reaching the figure of 75% employment rate for men and women, increasing research and development investment to 3% of the GDP, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20%.
- **Fiscal sustainability.** The reaffirmation of a collective determination to ensure fiscal sustainability, including by accelerating plans for fiscal consolidation.
- **Financial sustainability.** The commitment to ensure financial stability by addressing the gaps in regulation and supervision of financial markets, both at the level of the EU and at the G20.
- Agreement on the urgent need to reinforce the **coordination of economic policies**.
- Agreement on first orientations as regards the **Stability and Growth Pact and budgetary surveillance** as well as broader macroeconomic surveillance.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/115346.pdf

... Commission

Women and men in decision-making Second quarter 2010

The European Commission issues a quarterly update on women and men in decision-making in the political domain.

Data were collected between 26th April and 19th May 2010 and cover the results of national and regional elections that have taken place since early March 2010 and any recent changes in the composition of governments.

Selected developments in terms of the gender balance include:



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- Parliamentary elections in Hungary and in the UK resulted in relatively small changes in the gender balance and the respective leaders of the house remain male. In Hungary, the new parliament includes slightly fewer women than before (9% compared to 11%) whilst in the UK the number of women MPs reached its highest level ever (22% compared to 19% previously).
- In Hungary the new government is all male, as was the case for the outgoing government. In the UK, the new coalition cabinet led by Prime Minister David Cameron includes 16% women compared to 17% previously.
- Government reshuffles in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic both resulted in a better representation of women in the cabinet – Bulgaria 17% from 12%, Czech Republic 24% from 17%.
- Regional elections were held in France in early March 2010 with little change in the gender balance of those elected. Currently, six French regions have more than 50% women amongst the members of their regional assemblies and a further seven regions are very close to parity (with 49% women members). As was the case before the latest elections, women preside over just two regional assemblies.
- Regional elections were also organised in thirteen Italian regions in March. Although women lost the presidency of regional assemblies in Campania and in Emilia-Romagna, the share of female members of regional assemblies increased in almost half of the regions. The most significant increase occurred in Campania where the share of women representatives increased from 3% to 25%.

... Parliament

Bus and lorry drivers: Rules on working time and the self-employed

The European Parliament agreed that self-employed bus and lorry drivers must be brought under the same rules on working hours as drivers who work for companies. This vote confirmed a previous vote by the Employment and Social Affairs Committee.

A majority of MEPs voted to reject the Commission's proposal that self-employed drivers continue to be exempted from the 2002 Working Time Directive on the road transport industry.

The Employment Committee, in its vote of 28 April had cited health and safety and road safety concerns plus the need for fair competition in the industry. MEPs who supported the Commission's position focused on the problem of those self-employed drivers who are not really free to work for more than one client, rather than bringing genuine self-employed drivers within the legislation.

With the rejection of the Commission's proposal, the Directive 2002/15/CE remains in force. This Directive foresees the inclusion of self-employed bus and lorry drivers in the legislation from 23 March 2009.



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Background

Self-employed drivers were temporarily exempted from the rules of the existing EU directive on drivers' working hours but were due to come under those rules by 23 March 2009 unless the European Commission proposed legislation to the contrary. The Commission did just that in October 2008, seeking to exempt them permanently. Parliament has now rejected the Commission's proposal.

Self-employed drivers will also remain subject to the same rules as employed drivers on loading and unloading, assistance to passengers, cleaning and maintenance, and police and customs formalities. Current EU law on employed drivers lays down an average limit of 48 hours a week, which can rise to 60 hours a week provided it does not exceed the average of 48 hours a week over a four-month period.

... Eurostat

Euro area employment stable and EU27 down by 0.2%

First estimate for the first quarter of 2010

-1.2% and -1.5% respectively compared with the first quarter of 2009

According to national accounts estimates published by Eurostat, the number of persons employed in the euro area was stable in the first quarter of 2010 compared with the previous quarter.

In the same period, the number of persons employed in the EU27 decreased by 0.2%. In the fourth quarter of 2009, employment declined by 0.2% in the euro area and by 0.3% in the EU27.

Falls in employment were recorded in manufacturing and construction. Trade, transport & communication services remained stable in the euro area, but decreased by 0.2% in the EU27. Financial services & business activities increased by 0.5% in the euro area and by 0.3% in the EU27. Other services (which mainly include public administration, health and education) rose by 0.5% in the euro area and 0.4% in the EU27. Agriculture rose by 0.2% in the euro area and by 0.3% in the EU27.

Compared with the same quarter of the previous year, employment fell by 1.2% in the euro area and by 1.5% in the EU27 in the first quarter of 2010. In the fourth quarter of 2009, employment decreased by 2.0% and 2.1% respectively.



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First quarter 2010 compared with first quarter 2009

Euro area hourly labour costs rose by 2.1%, EU27 up by 2.2%

Hourly labour costs in the euro area rose by 2.1% in the year up to the first quarter of 2010, compared with 1.7% for the previous quarter. In the EU27, the annual rise was 2.2% up to the first quarter of 2010, compared with 2.0% for the previous quarter.

In the euro area, wages & salaries per hour worked grew by 2.0% in the year up to the first quarter of 2010, and the non-wage component by 2.1%, compared with 1.6% and 2.0% respectively for the fourth quarter of 2009. In the EU27, hourly wages & salaries rose by 2.3% and the non-wage component by 1.9% in the year up to the first quarter of 2010, compared with 1.9% and 2.5% respectively for the previous quarter.

The breakdown by economic activity shows that in the euro area hourly labour costs rose by 1.8% in industry, 2.1% in construction and 2.2% in services in the year up to the first quarter of 2010. In the EU27, labour costs per hour grew by 1.8% in industry, 1.4% in construction and 2.5% in services.

Member States

Among the Member States for which data are available for the first quarter of 2010, the highest annual increases in hourly labour costs were registered in Bulgaria and Romania. The highest annual decreases were observed in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and the Czech Republic.

The **Labour Cost Index** is a short-term indicator showing the development of hourly labour costs incurred by employers.

Total Labour Costs (TOT) cover wage and non-wage costs less subsidies. It does not include vocational training costs or other expenditures such as clothes, etc.

Wage and salary costs (WAG) include direct remunerations, bonuses, and allowances paid by an employer in cash or in kind to an employee in return for work done and remunerations in kind such as food, drink, fuel, company cars, etc.

Labour costs other than wages and salaries (OTH - non-wage costs) include the employers' social contributions plus employment taxes regarded as labour costs less subsidies intended to refund part or all of the employer's cost of direct remuneration.

Public Consultation on Cooperatives

Launched by the Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and Land

<http://www.finance.gov.mt/page.aspx?site=MFIN&page=ktk>

http://www.doi.gov.mt/EN/press_releases/2010/06/pr1122.asp