

Procedure file

Basic information		
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	2000/2219(COS)	Procedure completed
Social policy agenda: following the European Councils of Lisbon and Feira, Council of Nice, December 2000		
Subject 4.10 Social policy, social charter and protocol		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	EMPL Employment and Social Affairs		15/02/2000
		PSE VAN LANCKER Anne	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	LIBE Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	ITRE Industry, External Trade, Research, Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	FEMM Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities		18/04/2000
		PPE-DE KRATSA-TSAGAROPOULOU Rodi	
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Economic and Financial Affairs ECOFIN	2345	07/05/2001
	Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs2313		27/11/2000
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion		

Key events			
28/06/2000	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2000)0379	Summary
12/10/2000	Vote in committee		Summary
12/10/2000	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0291/2000	
23/10/2000	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
23/10/2000	Debate in Parliament		
25/10/2000	Decision by Parliament	T5-0464/2000	Summary

25/10/2000	End of procedure in Parliament		
12/07/2001	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2000/2219(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	EMPL/5/12924

Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		COM(2000)0379	28/06/2000	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0291/2000 OJ C 197 12.07.2001, p. 0008	12/10/2000	EP	
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report		CES1218/2000 OJ C 014 16.01.2001, p. 0079	19/10/2000	ESC	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0464/2000 OJ C 197 12.07.2001, p. 0109-0180	25/10/2000	EP	Summary
Committee of the Regions: opinion		CDR0300/2000 OJ C 144 16.05.2001, p. 0055	13/12/2000	CofR	
Non-legislative basic document		COM(2001)0104	22/02/2001	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		COM(2002)0416	17/07/2002	EC	Summary
Non-legislative basic document		COM(2003)0057	06/02/2003	EC	Summary
Follow-up document		COM(2003)0312	02/06/2003	EC	Summary
Follow-up document		COM(2004)0137	01/03/2004	EC	Summary

Social policy agenda: following the European Councils of Lisbon and Feira, Council of Nice, December 2000

PURPOSE: To provide a Communication on the Social Policy Agenda. **CONTENT:** The Lisbon European Council identified a fresh set of challenges which must be met so that Europe can become 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion'. This Social Policy Agenda forms part of the integrated European approach towards achieving the economic and social renewal outlined in Lisbon. Specifically, it seeks to ensure the positive and dynamic interaction of economic, employment and social policy, and to forge a political agreement which mobilises all key actors to work jointly towards the new strategic goal. At the heart of the Agenda is the modernisation of the European social model and the conversion of the political commitments made at Lisbon into concrete action. A wide range of actions are outlined in the Agenda: -some are targeted at realising Europe's full employment potential by creating more and better jobs, anticipating and managing change and adapting to the new working environment, exploiting the potential of the knowledge-based economy and promoting mobility; -others will centre on modernising and improving social protection, promoting social inclusion, strengthening gender equality and reinforcing fundamental rights and combating discrimination; -there are also initiatives devoted to preparing for enlargement and promoting international co-operation and making the social dialogue contribute to meeting the various challenges. While not all the actions are new, those which are on going have been refocused in accordance with the political directions give at Lisbon. A further innovation is that the open method of co-ordination, hitherto confined to the employment area, can now be applied to other social policies. This will ensure a more qualitative, and where appropriate, quantitative follow-up to agreed objectives and targets. The Agenda will provide key inputs for the annual synthesis report requested by the Lisbon Council.?

Social policy agenda: following the European Councils of Lisbon and Feira, Council of Nice,

The committee adopted the report by Anne VAN LANCKER (PES, B) on the Commission communication on the new social policy agenda for the medium term. The report was drawn up with a view to the expected conclusion of an agreement on the SPA at the Nice European Council in December. The committee shared the Commission's view that the social agenda should be very ambitious in order to reinforce the notion that social, economic and employment policy were inter-related and should be given equal priority in order to improve quality of life for all. For reasons of credibility, the committee nevertheless called for the Commission to distinguish more clearly between new projects and decisions already taken, and to define the Union's real priorities. It also urged the Commission to assess and reinforce the legislative framework currently in force, to define how the social agenda would be implemented and to ensure that its measures resulted in concrete legislative proposals. The report called on the Commission to take a number of steps to reinforce the new social agenda, such as: introducing a Community strategy on health and safety at work; revising directives on the collective and individual rights of workers, and introducing a new directive on protection against unwarranted dismissal; establishing the right to an income, a pension or minimum salary; adapting and reducing working time through consultation with social partners; and proposing an action plan for the inclusion of older and disabled workers into working life and the information society. Finally, the committee called for an annual assessment of the implementation of the social agenda, including the gender mainstreaming aspects, to be made at the spring European Council, and for the Commission to draw up a scoreboard showing the players involved, the instruments and the deadlines for each action. ?

Social policy agenda: following the European Councils of Lisbon and Feira, Council of Nice, December 2000

The European Parliament adopted the report drafted by Anne VAN LANCKER (PES, B) on the social policy agenda. The resolution was adopted by 395 votes in favour, 67 against and 92 abstentions. In adopting the report, the European Parliament calls on the Commission to undertake certain actions. The following are the main requests made to the Commission: - take into account the necessity of gender mainstreaming in all the sectors concerned by the social agenda and to monitor this process closely through regular reports; - complement its e-Europe action plan and its e-working, e-inclusion and e-learning initiatives with an action plan for the development of the social economy, local employment and the service sector; - present a directive on social protection for the new forms of employment; - reinforce the right to information, consultation and participation of workers; - present a proposal to amend Directive 92/85/EC on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers, those who have recently given birth or breastfeeding workers; - propose a legislative instrument on the introduction of a prior, binding test of the cross-border effects of social and fiscal legislation; - ensure that full account is taken of the social dimension in competition policy; - assess operation of the social clause in the context of the GSP (compliance with specific ILO conventions).?

Social policy agenda: following the European Councils of Lisbon and Feira, Council of Nice, December 2000

PRUPOSE : To present a mid-term review of the social policy agenda. CONTENT : In June 2000 the European Commission launched the "social policy agenda" for the period 2000-2005. Based on the Lisbon strategy for economic and social renewal the social policy agenda acts as a roadmap for employment and social policy. In March 2003 a conference was organised to evaluate, mid-term, the effectiveness of the social agenda and to reassess priorities for the coming years. When preparing the current assessment, the very different economic landscape the EU faces in 2003 (compared to the economic outlook of 2000 when the social policy agenda was first set) was taken into account. Attending the conference was a wide group of interested parties whose views and opinions were taken on board. Now that the social policy agenda has reached mid-point the Commission and interested parties have concluded that the priorities for the following years must be first and foremost a smooth transition from fifteen to twenty-five members in May 2004. With the average income level of the ten accession countries less than half of the average GDP per head of the current Member States there is plenty of work to be done. Other enlargement related challenges concern the discrimination faced by ethnic minorities such as the Roma. Concerning the employment rate in Europe, the Communication foresees that the average EU employment rate will be slightly reduced. To give an example, the employment rate in 2002 for the EU15 is estimated at 64.3%. That of the EU 25 would stand at 62.4% - in other words more than 7.5% below the Lisbon 2010 target. In view of these facts the Commission suggests that a key objective of the social policy agenda must be compliance with the social acquis and in particular the identification of supportive measures to do. The instrument, which will be relied upon to enact this priority, will be the European Social Fund. It will provide significant help in facilitating integration through a financial support mechanism. Further priorities will continue to be the need to create a knowledge based dynamic economy, with non-inflationary growth, more and better jobs, greater social cohesion and respect for the environment. These are all objectives listed by the Lisbon Council. Such an approach would undoubtedly facilitate an improvement in living standards and the overall quality of life in the EU. For the period beyond 2005 the Commission has established a High-level expert group on the future of employment and social policy. Its objectives are to ascertain the main orientations for future action in the field of social policy.?

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The Social Policy Agenda was born out of the Lisbon Agenda and is intended to modernise and improve the European social model. It seeks to create a dynamic interaction amongst those policy makers shaping the EU's economic, employment and social agenda. This is the fourth scoreboard presented by the European Commission to the European Parliament and Council. Its purpose is to assess and analyse progress made in relation to the Social Policy Agenda. Its objective is not to provide a ranking scoreboard of Member States' performance, but rather to monitor how the social policy agenda is being transformed into concrete action. In terms of the EU's economic, employment and social situation, the Report offers a bleak perspective on 2003. In the first half of 2003 the EU's economic performance continued to be weak. This is the third year in a row that economic growth has remained well below potential. In other words the social policy agenda has been active only

during a period of economic malaise. In 2003, the average GDP growth is expected to be 0.8%, compared to 1.1% for 2002 and 1.7% for 2001. The Autumn Economic Forecast predicts that the average GDP for 2004 will reach 2%. Reaching higher employment targets against such an economic backdrop has been a real challenge. Unemployment is expected to rise to 8% in 2003 - up from 7.7% in 2002. Unless further labour market reforms are implemented the Report predicts that employment will continue to stagnate in 2004. As a result, the Commission thinks it is highly improbable that the EU will be able to reach the 2005 67% employment target set by the Stockholm Council. On the positive side, the Stockholm intermediate target for women in employment by 2005 appears to be attainable. The target set in Stockholm is 57% and the total number of women in employment in 2003 amounted to 55.6%. As far as older workers are concerned the Commission reports a substantial increase but notes that the 50% target of total older workers employment by 2010 is some way off. Lastly, unemployment is expected to remain high, reaching 14.3% in 2003. Concerning the EU's social situation, the latest available data shows that about 15% of the EU population or about 55 million individuals are at risk of poverty in 2001, thus living below a threshold of 60% of the national median equivalised income. At least 9% of these are in persistent risk of poverty. Within the EU differences between countries do exist. For example, the risk of poverty was 10% in Sweden compared to 21% in Ireland. The Commission reports that the focus of the social agenda has started to shift from initiating new measures to monitoring implementation. An absolute top priority for the agenda is to work towards full employment as defined in the Lisbon agenda - namely, 70% by 2010. Given that it looks increasingly unlikely for this target to be reached the renewed social agenda strategy will be based on three overriding objectives: - Full employment. - Improved productivity and quality at work. - Strengthening social cohesion and inclusion. In line with this policy the Commission established, in 2003, a "European Employment Taskforce", which was headed by Wim Kok. The key message of the report was that success in creating more employment hinged on four key requirements: - Adaptability - Attracting more people to the labour market - Investing in human capital and - Implementation of reforms through better governance. To conclude, the Commission has identified two key initiatives for 2004: 1) Consolidating social standards throughout the EU by ensuring the correct transposition and application of the *acquis communautaire* - in other words to ensure a level playing field for businesses operating in the EU. In conjunction with this policy the Commission will make compliance with the social *acquis* a top priority. 2) Implementation of the objectives set for the social policy agenda set by Heads of State in Lisbon and endorsed by the Nice European Council.?