

EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY, HEALTH AND CONSUMERS

The Spanish Presidency will work to restrict the effect of the crisis on labour markets and its negative social effects, giving special attention to the most vulnerable and the new risks of exclusion.

Employment

Employment will be kept as a priority for the new EU 2020 Growth and Employment Strategy. The main objectives on the subject are the following:

Maintenance and creation of quality jobs by improving labour efficiency to increase business productivity and competitiveness through better workers' training and qualification. It is, therefore, necessary to promote new sources of employment and, particularly, the so-called *green-collar jobs*, linked to the fight against climate change, such as in the field of renewable energies, recycling and environmental preservation services; the *white-collar jobs*, tied to the new social assistance demands; and *the blue-collar jobs*, related to new technologies, chiefly information and communication technologies. Active employment and social inclusion policies should also be reinforced and new initiatives should be taken to favour business dynamism.

Structural changes should be introduced into the labour market to improve its operation. Job stability and continued requalification should be facilitated; job security should be increased by making the transition from unemployment to training and from training to employment easier, as well as the mobility between jobs; investment in human capital should be increased by improving training and adjusting education and training systems to the new market demands; mobility among EU States and among regions should be favoured; and a special effort should be made for the groups facing more labour integration problems to increase their participation in the labour market. Initiatives or proposals will be drawn up regarding the Directive on the posting of workers and the guarantee of workers' rights within the framework of the freedom to provide services.

Specific programmes fostering youth employment should be established for a better integration and longer continuance in the labour market, through measures that may fight educational failure and early dropout and to increase the number of young people completing secondary education or professional training. It is also essential to improve the transition between education and employment by boosting youth labour integration through training contracts that may strengthen their professional skills and enable a subsequent access to quality jobs. Training, advice and technical support instruments should be established to favour youths who wish to become entrepreneurs, particularly in new jobs linked to the new growth model, and offer incentives to companies to hire young workers, with a special emphasis on newcomers into the labour

market. Finally, undeclared employment, illegal employment and the grey economy should be combated.

In addition, we should pursue labour equality between men and women definitely, eliminating any form of discrimination.

Social Policy

The Spanish Presidency will collaborate with the Commission to analyse the implementation of the Revised Social Agenda established for 2008-2010, closing the current period. Ahead of this new period, the Spanish Presidency will closely work with the Commission in designing the new European Social Agenda, within a broad framework of consultation and cooperation with Member States, social interlocutors and the civil society in general. The gender equality perspective should become a key element in the new social cohesion model.

The Spanish Presidency's top priority concerning social protection and inclusion will be the consolidation of European social protection systems, from a perspective that fosters the active integration of those facing more difficulty when entering the labour market. In this regard, emphasis will be placed on the development of the activities foreseen for the celebration of the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. The disability perspective will be addressed from all dimensions as a focal point and particular attention will be paid to the various aspects of personal autonomy.

Given the social and demographic changes, which have carried major implications for social protection systems across Europe, joint work to set forth common objectives, established within the framework of the open coordination method, will be promoted. The production of a White Paper on Ageing in Europe and a European Active Ageing Programme will thus be encouraged.

The Spanish Presidency will submit to the Commission and the Member States the conclusions drawn at the European Forum of Social Tourism held in Spain, gathering the support to the Commission's decision of declaring 2012 as the European Year for Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity.

In order to make headway in ensuring access to social services of general interest and satisfactory quality, work will continue to find new instruments, whether through legal reforms or by deepening the open coordination method.

The Second European Summit on Gypsy Population will be held during this Presidency, with a link to the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.

Health

The Presidency will expand the 2006 Council Declaration on EU health systems' common values and principles, considering the priorities of the second

2008-2013 Community action programme on health and the Union's future health strategy.

During the Spanish Presidency, we shall try to foster the approval of the Directive on organ donation and transplant, the development of advanced therapies, as well as integrated care and assistance for chronic and non-transmissible diseases.

In terms of public health innovation, the Spanish Presidency will promote electronic health, or *e-health*, and will foster patients' quality and security improvement initiatives and the work conducted by the High Level Public Health Group.

With regard to medicines, safety and quality will be reinforced, improving pharmacovigilance systems and influencing on other aspects such as antimicrobial resistance, the rational use of antibiotics and the fight against drug forgery.

Special attention will be given to the regulatory progress made on food security, in issues such as consumer information on food products, new foodstuffs, food and animal origin food hygiene. Progress should also be made in obesity prevention plans.

Consumers

As to consumers' protection, work will continue on the regulation of their rights and progress will be attempted in relation to products' general safety.

Equality and non-Discrimination

As to gender equality and non-discrimination, the Spanish Presidency will make every effort to move toward labour equality between men and women, especially addressing measures on wage differences due to sex, part-time work, equal opportunities in the business world and balance between professional and family and personal life. Work will be done to mainstream a gender equality perspective throughout the EU 2020 Growth and Employment Strategy.

The Commission's assessment of the roadmap for gender equality concluding in 2010 will be followed up, and the creation of a new roadmap for 2011-2015 will be fostered.

Special attention will be given to violence against women. The creation of a European Observatory on Gender-based Violence will be proposed which, in collaboration with the European Gender Institute, will design common indicators on this matter.

The Spanish Presidency will continue assessing the progress and overseeing the fulfilment of the Beijing Action Platform. Issues related to gender-based violence and the wage gap will be analysed. The follow-up report on said programme will be submitted before the United Nations Women's Commission within the framework of its fifteenth anniversary (Beijing+15). The "Beijing+15" European Forum will be held to analyse the progress made and study future possibilities ahead of 2010.

During the next six months, the European Union should reach an agreement about the last directive proposal on the fight against discrimination based on religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation in non-working environments.