

Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) 2014-2020

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The Presidency briefed the Council about the state of play in the negotiations with the European Parliament on the EU programme for social change and innovation, which is part of the cohesion policy package for 2014-2020.

In June 2012, the Council reached a **partial general approach** on the draft regulation containing the programme. The budgetary provisions of the programme were not covered by the Council's partial general approach and will be adapted, once the decision on the EU's multi-annual financial framework for the period 2014-2020 is taken.

During the examination of the regulation by the Council's working party on social questions, a broad agreement was reached, with the following important changes being made:

- sub-dividing the Progress axis into three strands with minimum allocations corresponding to the current Progress programme;
- setting the threshold for access of social enterprises to microfinance at 30 million;
- adding specific provisions on co-financing;
- distributing the 5% reserve among the different axes;
- amending the definition on social enterprises to take into account different EU texts dealing with the issue of social enterprises.

Since then, three informal meetings have been held between the Parliament, the Council and the Commission in order to seek an agreement. The negotiations are based on the Commission's proposal, the Council's partial general approach and draft amendments established by the Parliament's Employment and Social Affairs Committee.

Until now, the negotiations have focused on the microfinance/social entrepreneurship axis and have allowed common ground to be found with the Parliament on this part of the programme, pending an overall agreement on the programme as a whole.

As regards the **EURES axis and issues relating to the governance of the programme**, discussions have recently started and will need to be continued. To deal with these and other outstanding issues, further negotiation meetings will be organised under the Irish Presidency.