Tripartite social summit for growth and employment

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PURPOSE: to revise Council Decision 2003/174/EC establishing a Tripartite Social Summit for Growth and Employment.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

BACKGROUND: the Tripartite Social Summit for Growth and Employment (TSS) was set up by Council Decision 2003/174/EC, which formalised the practice of holding highlevel, informal meetings since 1997 in the framework of the European Employment Strategy, and subsequently the Lisbon Strategy.

This Decision was proposed to institutionalise the practice of high-level consultation between the EU institutions and the EU social partners. The proposal meant abolishing the former Standing Committee on Employment, which was set up in 1970 and reformed in 1999.

Since 2003, the TSS has been a separate event from the European Council meetings and has broadly fulfilled its aim of facilitating the exchange of views at the highest level between the Commission, the EU Presidency and the EU social partners on employment and social aspects of the Lisbon Strategy (since 2010, and then of the Europe 2020 Strategy).

Until the Lisbon Treaty entered into force, the meetings were co-chaired by the Council Presidency and the President of the Commission. The 2003 Decision also gave a role to the two subsequent Presidencies.

In its Communication of 2 October 2013 on the social dimension of the EMU, the Commission announced that it will present a proposal to revise the 2003 Council Decision. This is the aim of this proposal.

The amendment of the 2003 Council Decision is also needed as a result of the institutional changes brought in by the Treaty of Lisbon.

In addition, the overall policy framework needs to be revised, replacing the Lisbon Strategy with the Europe 2020 Strategy and specifying how the TSS for Growth and Employment contributes to the overall governance.

CONTENT: this proposal seeks to revise the 2003 Council Decision. The main provisions may be summarised as follows:

Task: its tasks shall be to:

- ensure, in compliance with the Treaty and with due regard for the powers of the institutions and bodies of the Union, that there is a continuous concertation between the Council, the Commission
- and the social partners;
- enable the social partners at European level to contribute, in the context of their social dialogue, to the various components of the Union’s strategy for growth and jobs.

Membership: the main amendments concern the membership of the TSS. The Summit shall consist of the:

President of the European Council,

- the Council Presidency,
- the two subsequent presidencies,
- the Commission,
- the social partners.

The ministers from those three presidencies and the Commissioner responsible for employment and social affairs shall also be present.

The social partners' representatives shall be divided into two delegations of equal size comprising 10 workers' representatives and 10 employers' representatives, taking into account the need to ensure a balanced participation between men and women.

Each delegation shall consist of representatives of European cross-industry organisations, either representing general interests or more specific interests of supervisory and managerial staff and small and medium-sized businesses at European level.

Technical coordination shall be provided for the workers' delegation by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and for the employers' delegation by the Confederation of European Business (BUSINESSEUROPE).

Technical provisions are set out as regards:

- the preparation of the Summit;
- the operation (the Summit shall meet at least twice a year. The meetings shall be held before the respective spring and autumn sessions of the European Council);
- information on the Summit's discussions.

Presidency and organisation: the Summit shall be chaired jointly by the President of the European Council and the President of the Commission.

The meetings of the Summit shall be convened by the joint chairmen on their own initiative, in consultation with the social partners.