

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

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This document presents the Commission's communication on the scoreboard on implementing the social policy agenda. The Nice European Council endorsed the Social Policy Agenda until 2005. It invited the Commission to present annually a scoreboard outlining the progress made in implementing the Agenda, starting with a first report to be submitted to the Stockholm Summit. The Social Policy Agenda provides a coherent framework for new initiatives. They are not only derived from the Amsterdam treaty, but also play a major role in transposing the reform agenda agreed in Lisbon in March 2000. The Lisbon Summit laid down highly ambitious, yet realistic, strategic objectives for the European Union to become by 2010 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based economy capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion'. For ease of presentation, the scoreboard retains the six headlines of the Social Policy Agenda as annexed to the Nice Presidency Conclusions. Together they provide a clear overview of the situation in terms of action to reinforce the quality of work, quality of social policy and quality of industrial relations. The presentation of a first scoreboard for the Stockholm Summit, a few months after the Agenda's endorsement in Nice, means that a number of initiatives are only at a first stage, while on the other hand, some achievements are the result of initiatives launched before the Social Policy Agenda. However, implementation is a dynamic process linking the old to the new, and involving as many actors at different levels. Therefore, this dynamic and flexible aspect is reflected in the Scoreboard. This Scoreboard so early in the process, does in no way pre-empt the format of or the substances of any future scoreboards monitoring the progress of implementing the Social Policy Agenda. Despite the early period in the implementation phase of the Social Policy Agenda, significant progress has already been made to put in place concrete policy measures. However, the complete implementation of the Agenda depends on the full commitment of all actors to take up their responsibility and to engage in work aimed at sustainable economic growth, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. The social partners hold an important key in their hands. It is crucial that they use this key to make real progress in those areas for which they are competent.