Basic information

2000/2219(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	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	VAN LANCKER Anne (PSE)	15/02/2000

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	KRATSA-TSAGAROPOULOU Rodi (PPE-DE)	18/04/2000

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Economic and Financial Affairs ECOFIN	2345	2001-05-07
Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs	2313	2000-11-27

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
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 148
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	EMPL/5/12924

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0291/2000 OJ C 197 12.07.2001, p. 0008	12/10/2000	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0464/2000 OJ C 197 12.07.2001, p. 0109-0180	25/10/2000	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2000)0379	28/06/2000	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2001)0104	22/02/2001	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	COM(2002)0416	17/07/2002	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2003)0057	06/02/2003	Summary
Follow-up document	COM(2003)0312	02/06/2003	Summary
Follow-up document	COM(2004)0137	01/03/2004	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES1218/2000 OJ C 014 16.01.2001, p. 0079	19/10/2000	
CofR	Committee of the Regions: opinion	CDR0300/2000 OJ C 144 16.05.2001, p. 0055	13/12/2000	

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

2000/2219(COS) - 27/11/2000

The Council agreed unanimously on the "Social Policy Agenda" on the basis of the French Presidency compromise text endorsed by all delegations. The document will be forwarded to the Nice European Council in December for approval,

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

2000/2219(COS) - 01/03/2004 - Follow-up document

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 fro, 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 increases 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.

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

2000/2219(COS) - 28/06/2000 - Non-legislative basic document

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, December 2000

2000/2219(COS) - 17/07/2002

The European Employment Strategy (EES) was launched at the Luxembourg Jobs Summit (1997) against a background of high levels of unemployment. The Lisbon European Council of 2000 updated the Strategy - adopting the goal of full employment; setting medium term employment targets and integrating the Strategy into a wider framework of policy co-ordination. The European Social Agenda - endorsed at the Nice European Council - called for an in-depth review of the first five years of the EES in 2002. The recent Barcelona European Council called for a reinforced Employment Strategy and provided directions for the future of the EES. This Communication reviews the experience of five years of the EES on the basis of an overall EU labour market performance assessment and an evaluation of the policies implemented by the Member States under the "Luxembourg" process. It also reviews the main issues, which will have to be addressed when re-designing the Strategy for the future. In recent years, the EU labour market performance has visibly improved, with more than 10 million new jobs created since 1997 (6 million of which were taken up by women) and 4 million fewer people unemployed, while the active population continued to grow by 5 million people. The evaluation confirms that these improvements are not simply a reflection of a better overall economic environment but do reflect structural and sustainable improvements in the functioning of the EU labour markets. In particular it demonstrates a reduction in levels of structural unemployment, and a more employment-intensive pattern of economic growth combined with improvements in labour productivity. It also establishes that in the last few years there has been a more rapid labour market response to economic and social changes than in previous economic cycles, reflecting greater flexibility in the EU labour market. A number of specific policy changes have taken place: - employment policies and the role of public employment services have been reshaped to support an active and preventive approach; - in some Member States tax-benefit systems have been adapted in line with the principles of activation; - labour taxation started to become more employment friendly; - education and training systems increasingly adapted to labour market needs; - progress in modernising work organisation has occurred, notably in terms of working time arrangements and more flexible work contracts; - gender mainstreaming has become generalised, with various initiatives taken to tackle the gender gaps, including the provision of childcare facilities to improve the reconciliation of work and family life; - new common paradigms such as lifelong learning and quality at work were recognised as policy priorities, with convergence in these areas starting to take place. Beyond this general process of policy convergence, the open method of co-ordination of the Luxembourg process has demonstrated its added value in fostering partnerships and new working methods, both at national and EU level. Overall, the Strategy has brought a shift in national policy formulation and focus - away from managing unemployment, towards managing employment growth. Despite progress, there remain serious employment challenges -not least in terms of responding to demographic trends, the emergence of bottlenecks, regional differences in performance, and the ongoing economic and social restructuring, globalisation and enlargement. In order to cope effectively with these challenges, the Luxembourg process has to be refocused on its main priorities : creating more and better jobs, and promoting an inclusive labour market. To this end, the Communication identifies four main issues for the EES reform: a) the need to set clear objectives in response to the policy challenges, b) the need to simplify the policy guidelines without undermining their effectiveness, c) the need to improve governance and partnership in the execution of the strategy and d) the need to ensure greater consistency and complementarity with respect to other relevant EU processes, notably the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines.

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

2000/2219(COS) - 22/02/2001

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.

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

2000/2219(COS) - 02/06/2003 - Follow-up document

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.

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

2000/2219(COS) - 06/02/2003

PURPOSE : to present the scoreboard on implementing the social policy agenda (third update). CONTENT : the social policy agenda is the EU's roadmap for modernising and improving the European social model by investing in people and building an active welfare state. It should contribute to achieving the strategic objective defined at the Lisbon European Council which is to strengthen social policy as a productive factor as well as solidarity and social fairness. This is the third scoreboard the Commission presents to report on the implementation of the social policy agenda. This edition focuses essentially on the main achievements of the year 2002. This report shows that the agenda is still on schedule and that it has helped to make EU labour markets more employment-friendly with 2.5 million new jobs created in 2001-2002. The report also highlights that the EU cannot be complacent and must step up the rhythm of reform if, as the Lisbon summit has set out, 15 million more new jobs are to be created between now and 2010. The Commission particularly criticises Member States for failing to set national employment targets, which risks undermining progress towards the Lisbon employment targets. The report also calls for action to reduce unemployment rates which, nudged by the economic downturn, have crept up to 7.8% in the EU, and 8.5% in the eurozone. The report adds that labour market weaknesses are partly responsible for keeping people in social exclusion and poverty. Latest available income data show that 15% of the EU population are a poverty risk, and 9% are at persistent risk of poverty. However, the report underlines that 40% of the EU population would have been at risk of poverty if welfare transfers were to be taken out of the calculation. It also points forward to the midterm review of the Social Policy Agenda later this year, which will stress the need for 'better jobs' as a motor of growth, both through productivity gains and by attracting more people into work. It is estimated that if the EU gave the equivalent of one extra year of education and training to everyone, it would increase overall EU productivity by about 5% immediately and an additional 5% in the long run. By the same token, good health boosts productivity : healthy workers earn 15-30% more than workers in poor health. As to the year 2003, a number of important initiatives will be launched by the Commission. Among these initiatives, the following will issues will be dealt with: - key initiatives on employment; - legislative and non-legislative initiatives on change and the working environment; - several communications and reports on promoting social inclusion and fighting discrimination; - legislative initiatives on social protection; - the recasting of the directive on equal opportunities; - the follow-up of the enlargement preparations.

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

2000/2219(COS) - 25/10/2000 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

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).