



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

from:	Employment Committee
to:	Delegations
Subject:	Work programme of the Employment Committee for 2013

Delegations will find attached the 2013 Work Programme of the Employment Committee and its subgroups, as adopted in accordance with the Committee's rules of procedure, with a view to the meeting of the EPSCO Council on 28 February 2013 (Any Other Business item).

INTRODUCTION

The main elements of the Committee's work relate to the preparation of the EPSCO Council proceedings with regard to the Europe 2020 strategy, including the European Employment Strategy (EES) and its instruments.

Reinforced multi-lateral surveillance under Europe 2020:

During 2012 EMCO under-went considerable efforts to establish a reinforced cycle of surveillance on the implementation of reforms to address the Council agreed Country-specific recommendations. This helped establish an effective governance method to support EU and national policy-making under Europe 2020, and to respond to a mandate from the EPSCO Council to reinforce the political dialogue between the different stakeholders involved and to improve the accountability and ownership of the Member States.

Recognising the value this enhanced surveillance has delivered to EPSCO, including by reinforcing the country specific nature of Council Recommendations, and in order to deliver on the call from the 2012 June European Council that the European Union's new tools for economic governance must be applied fully and effectively and recourse to "peer pressure" should be enhanced, EMCO will further reinforce and improve this work during 2013. In particular, in order to fully embrace its responsibilities conferred by Article 148 TFEU, EMCO will:

- 1) Expand and further strengthen the multilateral surveillance working methods of the committee through thematic and country reviews, incorporating findings from the Mutual Learning Programme, inviting ad hoc external experts if possible, a more prominent use of the Employment Performance Monitor and the benchmarking tool embedded within it, and the use of a "Reform Tacking Device" to monitor implementation on a more continuous basis.

- 2) Carry out thematic reviews, when relevant, in cooperation with all other relevant committees, notably SPC, EPC and the Education Committee, aiming to provide policy advice to Member States in implementing the country-specific recommendations;
- 3) Intensify cooperation and consultation with key stakeholders having a major responsibility within Member States for operational delivery of reforms in CSRs, notably the Social Partners under the requirement for the Committee to consult both management and labour.
- 4) Strengthen the monitoring of the employment and social situation of Member States which currently have a Memorandum of Understanding with the European Union, International Monetary Fund and European Central Bank, and ensure that those member States are fully involved in the monitoring of the Employment Guidelines and the relevant multilateral surveillance procedures laid down in Article 148 TFEU;
- 5) Inform the Council of its views on the labour market aspects of the in-depth reviews prepared by the European Commission as provided for under Article 5 of the Regulation on the prevention and correction of Macroeconomic Imbalances.
- 6) To ensure a more active use of the work of the European Employment Observatory and the Mutual Learning Programme in the work of the Committee.

This work has four clear milestones, to make the activity over the year as streamlined as possible and to continuously build progress towards the Europe 2020 headline target. The main stages are:

- February EPSCO, with a focus on priorities for the year ahead, preparing for the Spring European Council;
- June EPSCO, with the results of the multilateral surveillance on CSRs including presenting new, draft CSRs in the context of key challenges;
- October EPSCO, with a review of progress based on the 2103 European Semester
- December EPSCO, with a longer-term forward look at strategic objectives and a review of the progress and orientation on forthcoming priorities.

MAIN PRIORITIES and ACTIVITIES for 2013

Main EMCO deliverables throughout the annual EES cycle

The main policy priority for EMCO in 2013 is to further strengthen the multilateral surveillance under the EES. Notwithstanding other activities to make progress on Europe 2020 which EMCO will carry out at the request of the Council in the framework of agreed priorities, EMCO will focus its attention on:

1. (Jan-Feb) Preparing EPSCO's input to the Spring European Council

EMCO is mandated to undertake the preparatory work in view of the Council's assessment of the Annual Growth Survey and in view of the Council's adoption of the Joint Employment Report and the Employment Guidelines. EMCO shall carry out these tasks in cooperation with the Social Protection Committee.

EMCO will also make a major contribution to enhanced governance arrangements under Europe 2020 through an extra-ordinary meeting to consult and discuss with national social partners on areas related to economic governance. This will begin with the topic of wages.

2. (January-June) Undertaking multilateral surveillance on the implementation of employment policies at national level and preparing the Council's country specific recommendations referred in Art.148

EMCO is committed to ensuring a stronger level of multilateral surveillance and peer review on the implementation of the CSRs, Euro Plus Pact commitments, and in-depth reviews triggered by the identification of possible macro-economic imbalances.

EMCO will therefore carry out a series of theme based and country-specific peer reviews designed to be conducted in a timely manner (a detailed explanation of these reviews is found in annex 1 alongside the main agenda items for the 2013 meetings). The Country specific reviews would also be designed to ensure an examination of the responses set out in National Reform Programmes and their National Job Plans. The conclusions from these reviews will be discussed and agreed within the committee and used during discussions on the Commission proposals for Council Recommendations.

Following the multilateral surveillance, EMCO will, in line with treaty commitments on a Council examination of Member State employment policies, prepare a report to be transmitted to the June EPSCO Council. This report will reflect the multilateral views of the committee as a result of the thematic and country reviews and the examination of the National Job Plans. The main messages from this report would be intended to steer a political debate at EPSCO.

Alongside this, EMCO will prepare the Council's adoption of country specific recommendations about employment and social affairs under all relevant legal bases and in particular under article 148, in cooperation with the other relevant committees in order to ensure consistency across the full package of integrated recommendations. EMCO will also agree and then transmit to the Council the Employment Performance Monitor.

3. (July-Oct) Preparing the October EPSCO debate on the European Semester

EMCO will prepare the EPSCO Council for its future debates on Europe 2020 with a forward look that will draw on a review of the 2013 European Semester and the work that fed into it. To present the new cycle of multilateral surveillance, EMCO can summarise the key challenges arising from the CSRs and Performance Monitor so far. An interim evaluation of the governance arrangements from the committee's perspective can inspire forward looking recommendations both on further improvements and on the Council's role. EMCO needs also to report back to EPSCO on any work in progress on the concept of Principles and views on coordination in the longer term.

4. (Oct-Dec) Preparing a December EPSCO policy debate on the employment situation in Europe.

With the mid-term review of Europe 2020 in mind, and taking into account the intention of the Commission to publish the Annual Growth Survey and Draft Joint Employment Report in November, EMCO will report to the December EPSCO on future prospects for the Europe 2020 objectives and targets, and on employment policy reform priorities for the medium term, particularly with a view to revising Employment Guidelines if that step is agreed on. This report will take stock of the profound changes to many labour markets over recent years, aim to establish good practice, and begin to assess impact.

This contribution shall take into account the results of the Mutual Learning Programme and exchanges with other stakeholders (other policy committees, social partners, European Parliament, international organisations). EMCO will continue its multilateral surveillance work and will agree and then transmit to the Council the Employment Performance Monitor

Other policy priorities

At request of the Council, EMCO may also prepare other policy opinions or reports in line with the Presidency policy priorities and as response to the Commission work programme. These give EMCO an opportunity to highlight particular priorities within the current challenges as expressed through the JER and themes in the CSRs. At this preliminary stage, the following work can be envisaged, which can fit into our thematic multilateral surveillance:

- Monitor the follow-up to the Youth Employment Package.
- Follow-up to the Commission's proposals for the new Structural Fund programming, in particular to help ensure all instruments are marshalled to meet employment challenges under Europe 2020.
- Follow-up of the Commission's Social Investment package, in particular as a focus for joint working with the SPC and other stakeholders on Active Inclusion.

WORKING METHODS

In order to support the EPSCO Council's ambition to contribute both to the macro-surveillance and to play a stronger and timely leading role in the thematic surveillance, EMCO working methods will require further adaptation in 2013. In particular, EMCO will:

- enhance the robustness of its analysis through a more active use of the Employment Performance Monitor, and its benchmarking tool;
- further enlarge the current scope of its analysis, taking forward its expertise in employment issues that have a clear link with the macroeconomic context and promoting debate in EPSCO on these issues;

- reinforce working methods to deliver a committee wide view on implementation in each Member State. This would involve more peer review and multilateral surveillance in order to support EPSCO in reaching an informed opinion on the implementation of employment policy reforms necessary in Member States, including those where macroeconomic imbalances are detected under the enhanced governance arrangements, and as called for under any closer coordination under a Fiscal Compact.

In order to carry its tasks, EMCO will be supported by its sub-groups:

- The **Ad-Hoc Group** will continue to provide policy based work to underpin EMCO work and debates. To this end, the Ad Hoc group will play a prominent role in the thematic reviews of the Country-specific Recommendations so that the Committee builds in-depth knowledge on each country. The Mutual Learning Programme (MLP)/European Employment Observatory (EEO) activities will be coordinated to ensure that the results of the MLP/EEO contribute systematically to the Ad Hoc Group work.
- The **Indicators Group** will continue to support EMCO in the quantitative description and analysis of the policy issues. The continued work of the group on the Joint Assessment Framework (JAF) and in developing the twice-annual Employment Performance Monitor, including its benchmarking tool, will provide the quantitative background for EMCO's work.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER COMMITTEES:

EMCO will continue its work in promoting a close working relationship with all relevant committees working towards the Europe 2020 goals. In order to ensure a coordinated input to EPSCO, EMCO will regularly cooperate with the Social Protection Committee and the Education Committee to account for their views on social policy (related to Employment Guideline 10) and education policies (related to Employment Guidelines 8 and 9) respectively. This will be carried out in light of the work related to the Joint Employment Report, thematic reviews of Country-specific Recommendations, the assessment of the National Reform Programmes and the preparation of the Joint Assessment Framework.

A closer cooperation with Social Protection Committee is envisaged in the following areas:

- Assessment of the implementation of reforms taken by Member States to address Country Specific Recommendations, Euro Plus Pact and National Reform Programme commitments, through theme-based peer review and further joint work on the Joint assessment Framework and an improved coherence between the Employment and Social Protection Monitors;
- Preparation of joint draft EPSCO Council conclusions on the AGS and Joint Employment Report.
- Preparation of Council country specific recommendations.

A closer cooperation with Education Committee is envisaged in the following areas:

- Assessment of the implementation of reforms taken by Member States to address Country Specific Recommendations, Euro Plus Pact and National Reform Programme commitments, through joint theme-based peer review;
- Preparation of Council country specific recommendations.

A closer cooperation with Economic Policy Committee is also envisaged in the following areas:

- Assessment of the implementation of reforms taken by Member States to address Country Specific Recommendations, Euro Plus Pact and National Reform Programme commitments, and in the context of enhanced economic governance, through joint thematic examinations;
- Preparation of Council country specific recommendations;
- Exchange of views on employment areas with direct impact on macroeconomic situation and vice-versa.

EMCO will take the opportunity to further its cooperation with the Network of Heads of Public Employment Services to receive evidence from their coordination e.g the PES to PES Dialogue, peer reviews and on-going work on PES benchmarking, to feed into our multilateral surveillance, and in turn EMCO will propose issues for the Network to consider on further putting PES at the service of Europe 2020 objectives.

COOPERATION WITH SOCIAL PARTNERS:

The Committee, in response to the suggestions outlined in the Commission's Employment Package, will reinforce its contacts with both sides of Industry. EMCO will have several exchanges of views with Social Partners at European level in preparation of its contributions to EPSCO throughout the annual Europe 2020 cycle, particularly in view of the preparation of the Joint Employment Report, the assessment of the National Reform Programmes and the preparation of EMCO's contribution to the December EPSCO Council.

Alongside this, EMCO will make a major contribution to enhanced governance arrangements under Europe 2020 through an extra-ordinary meeting to consult and discuss with national social partners on areas related to economic governance. This will begin with the topic of wages.

ANNEX 1: DETAILS OF MULTILATERAL SURVEILLANCE:

1. PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE FOR THE EMCO AND SUB-GROUP MEETINGS FOR 2013

Month/year	Meeting	Date	Main topics
		2013	
January	<i>EMCO Ad Hoc</i>	<u>10/1/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review on ALMPs and PES • Presentation of pilot RTD
	<i>EMCO IG</i>	<u>24/1/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on Benchmarking • Adoption of Work Programme
	<i>EMCO</i>	<u>31/1/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision on the Employment Guidelines • Adoption of Work Programme • Discussion and adoption of JER and key messages • Adoption of EPSCO Council draft conclusions
February	<i>Conference</i>	<u>1/2/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>EMCO Tripartite Conference on Wages with European and national Social Partners</i>
	<i>EPC/EMCO</i>	<u>19/2/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Review on the Tax Wedge on Labour
	<i>EPSCO</i>	<u>28/2/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of JER
March	<i>EMCO IG</i>	<u>7/3/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JAF core business
	<i>EMCO (inf)</i>	<u>11-12/3/2013</u>	
	<i>EMCO Ad Hoc</i>	<u>20/3/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review on Labour Market Participation
April	<i>EMCO/EPC</i>	<u>16/4/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint thematic review on Employment Protection Legislation (am) • EMCO review on labour market functioning (pm)
	<i>EMCO Ad Hoc</i>	<u>24/4/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint review with EDUC committee on Youth
	<i>EMCO IG</i>	<u>25/4/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JAF core business and a first discussion on a draft EPM
	<i>EMCO</i>	<u>30/4/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review on Wages with the participation of the EPC

May	<i>EMCO</i>	<u>15-16/5/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country Examination of the NRPs Discussion of NRPs with Social Partners
	<i>EMCO IG</i>	<u>29/5/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endorsement of the EPM and benchmarking
	<i>EMCO</i>	<u>30/5/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall discussion on CSR package Multilateral surveillance adoption of conclusions Adoption of EPM
June	<i>EMCO</i>	<u>5-6/6/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSR negotiation (dates tbc)
	<i>EMCO/SPC then EPC</i>	<u>11-13/5/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSR negotiation
	<i>EPSCO</i>	<u>20-21/6/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endorsement CSR package
July	<i>Inf EPSCO</i>	<u>8-9/7/2013</u>	
September	<i>EMCO Ad Hoc</i>	<u>10/9/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2013 European Semester evaluation
	<i>EMCO IG</i>	<u>12/9/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPM, JAF and benchmark process discussion
	<i>EMCO/SPC (inf)</i>	<u>18/9/2013</u>	
October	<i>EMCO</i>	<u>3/10/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2013 European Semester evaluation
	<i>EMCO Ad hoc EPSCO</i>	<u>8/10/2013 15/10/2013</u>	
	<i>EMCO IG</i>	<u>17/10/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Jobs update (tentative)
	<i>EMCO Ad Hoc</i>	<u>29/10/2013</u>	
	<i>EMCO</i>	<u>30/10/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMCO discussion on labour markets undergoing profound change report first draft

November	<i>EMCO IG</i>	<u>19/11/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorse the JAF, EPM, benchmark revision • Launch work programme • Adoption of EPM • Adoption of Report to EPSCO on labour markets under-going profound change • Discussion on AGS and draft JER with Social Partners • First discussion on work programme 2014
	<i>EMCO</i>	<u>30/11/2013</u>	
December	<i>EMCO Ad Hoc</i>	<u>31/11/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch work programme
	<i>EPSCO</i>	<u>9+10/12/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorsement of EPM + benchmark

ANNEX II EMCO Ad-Hoc Group Work Programme 2013

In 2013 the Ad-hoc group will continue to provide policy based analysis to underpin the work of EMCO and steer its debates. A key element of this will be the prominent role of the sub-group in delivering the multilateral surveillance analysis of the implementation of the Country-specific recommendations (CSRs). This will demand a close working relationship and coordinated agendas for the two groups.

I. MAIN EMCO ACTIVITIES AND PRIORITIES FOR 2013

The main policy priority for EMCO in 2013 is to further strengthen the multilateral surveillance under the European Employment Strategy. Notwithstanding other activities to make progress on Europe 2020 which EMCO will carry out at the request of the Council in the framework of agreed priorities, EMCO will focus its attention on:

5. (Jan-Feb) Preparing EPSCO's input to the Spring European Council

EMCO is mandated to undertake the preparatory work in view of the Council's assessment of the Annual Growth Survey and in view of the Council's adoption of the Joint Employment Report and the Employment Guidelines. EMCO shall carry out these tasks in cooperation with the Social Protection Committee.

EMCO will also make a major contribution to enhanced governance arrangements under Europe 2020 through an extra-ordinary meeting to consult and discuss with national social partners on areas related to economic governance. This will begin with the topic of wages.

6. (January-June) Undertaking multilateral surveillance on the implementation of employment policies at national level and preparing the Council's country specific recommendations referred in Art.148

EMCO is committed to ensuring a stronger level of multilateral surveillance and peer review on the implementation of the CSRs, Euro Plus Pact commitments, and in-depth reviews triggered by the identification of possible macro-economic imbalances.

EMCO will therefore carry out a series of theme based and country-specific peer reviews designed to be conducted in a timely manner (a detailed explanation of these reviews is found in annex 1 alongside the main agenda items for the 2013 meetings). The Country specific reviews would also be designed to ensure an examination of the responses set out in National Reform Programmes and their National Job Plans. The conclusions from these reviews will be discussed and agreed within the committee and used during discussions on the Commission proposals for Council Recommendations.

Following the multilateral surveillance, EMCO will, in line with treaty commitments on a Council examination of Member State employment policies, prepare a report to be transmitted to the June EPSCO Council. This report will reflect the multilateral views of the committee as a result of the thematic and country reviews and the examination of the National Job Plans. The main messages from this report would be intended to steer a political debate at EPSCO.

Alongside this, EMCO will prepare the Council's adoption of country specific recommendations about employment and social affairs under all relevant legal bases and in particular under article 148, in cooperation with the other relevant committees in order to ensure consistency across the full package of integrated recommendations. EMCO will also transmit to the Council the Employment Performance Monitor.

7. **(July-Oct) Preparing the October EPSCO debate on the European Semester**

EMCO will prepare an evaluation of the 2013 European Semester from the committee's perspective and provide forward looking recommendations for the EPSCO Council to discuss on ways of further improving governance arrangements and the Council's role.

8. **(Oct-Dec) Preparing a December EPSCO policy debate on the employment situation in Europe.**

With the mid-term review of Europe 2020 in mind, and taking into account the intention of the Commission to publish the Annual Growth Survey and Draft Joint Employment Report in November, EMCO will report to the December EPSCO on future prospects for the Europe 2020 objectives and targets, and on employment policy reform priorities for the medium term, particularly with a view to revising Employment Guidelines if that step is agreed on. This report will take stock of the reforms taken in the labour market over recent years, aim to establish good practice, and begin to assess impact.

This contribution shall take into account the results of the Mutual Learning Programme and exchanges with other stakeholders (other policy committees, social partners, European Parliament, international organisations). EMCO will continue its multilateral surveillance work.

Other policy priorities

At request of the Council, EMCO may also prepare other policy opinions or reports in line with the Presidency policy priorities and as response to the Commission work programme. These give EMCO an opportunity to highlight particular priorities within the current challenges as expressed through the JER and themes in the CSRs. At this preliminary stage, the following work can be envisaged, which can fit into our thematic multilateral surveillance:

- Follow-up to the Commission Communication on the Youth package, in particular to support Member States with guidance on good practice.
- Follow-up to the Commission's proposals for the new Structural Fund programming, in particular to help ensure all instruments are marshalled to meet employment challenges under Europe 2020.
- Follow-up of the Commission's Social Investment package, in particular as a focus for joint working with the SPC and other stakeholders on Active Inclusion.

II. THE AD-HOC GROUP PREPARATORY ROLE TO EMCO ACTIVITIES

Working methods

In 2013 the Ad Hoc Group will play a prominent role in the reinforcement of the multilateral surveillance so that the Committee builds in-depth and fact-based knowledge on the employment policies and the European labour markets situation. In particular, the Ad-hoc group will:

- Conduct several thematic peer reviews on the policy measures and reforms implemented by the Member States to respond to the country-specific recommendations issued by the Council;
- Develop argumentation and provide the qualitative analytical background for further policy debates (to be fed with input from the Commission services and EMCO Support Team, external experts, the Mutual Learning Programme, as well as existing experience collected from Member States);
- Work alongside the Commission to deliver a "Reform-Tracking Device" which monitors the progress of the Member States in implementing commitments made under Europe 2020 on a quarterly basis;

- Prepare a contribution to EPSCO on the employment situation in countries with Memorandum of Understanding with the EU, IMF and ECB and the role of labour market reforms in readdressing the economic situation;
- Ensure that the Mutual Learning Programme and the European Employment Observatory provide regular input into EMCO work under Europe 2020.

Cooperation with other committees and networks

- The Ad-hoc group will be a key interlocutor for EMCO's relationship with a number of relevant committees and networks involved directly or indirectly in the achievement of the Europe 2020 targets. For example, the peer review on *Youth Labour Market Participation and Employment* will be jointly carried out with the **Education Committee**. The **Network of Heads of Public Employment Services** will provide analytical input for the peer review on *ALMPs and PES*.

Provisional Timetable for the EMCO Ad-hoc group meetings

January	<u>10/1/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic peer review on ALMPs and PES • Presentation of the pilot '<i>Reform Tracking Device</i>' (tbc)
March	<u>20/3/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic peer review on Labour Market Participation
April	<u>24/4/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint thematic peer review with the Education Committee on Youth (tbc)
September	<u>10/9/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First 'post-mortem' discussion on the European Semester 2013
October	<u>8/10/2013</u> <u>29/10/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful labour market reforms outside the EU • Discussion on the labour market situation in Member States under a Memorandum of Understanding
December	<u>3/12/2013</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First discussion on the work programme 2014 • First discussion on the AGS and JER

ANNEX III EMCO Indicators Group Work Programme 2013***Main areas of work***

The broad EMCO priorities imply that the Indicators Group will have to support the surveillance and monitoring capacities of EMCO in various ways:

- It will contribute to further refine the indicators and methodology used under the Joint Assessment Framework. This will include additional work to explore in more depth the monitoring of specific policy areas.
- It will also continue its work on the monitoring and integration into the JAF of multidimensional policy concepts (e.g. Flexicurity) and of aspects of the Employment Package and the youth employment package

Possible specific methodological issues

In order to enhance surveillance and monitoring capacities and facilitating the link with the qualitative¹ aspects of the monitoring, a number of additional specific methodological issues would merit further attention:

- Develop the indicators on the sectors with the highest employment creation potential; ICT, Health and Social care sector and green jobs. After having agreed in the EMCO IG in 2012 on the inclusion of these sectors in the EPM its further development in the JAF is necessary in 2013, i.e. on the basis of the work done in 2010 on employment and environment.
- Further development of the policy area for wage especially with the aim to analyze wage adequacy
- The issue of labour mobility has been more and more discussed in recent years as a tool for matching the supply and demand at the labour market. The Indicators Group should undertake work in exploring and developing indicators in this area.

¹ The qualitative assessment of the development at the labour market is part of the whole picture when analysing the key employment challenges but is not part of EMCO Indicators' Group's mandate.

- CEDEFOP indicators on skills and qualifications: The IG could explore further the CEDEFOP indicators for identifying skills needs and mismatches for monitoring purposes.
- investigate the possibility to analyse the ESF use and the impact of ESF financed measures in the context of employment policies

Working methods

The tasks of the Indicators Group, as defined by the Terms of Reference, are:

- developing, revising, and improving the set of common indicators (performance, policy and structural performance indicators) used to assess overall employment performance and results in light of statistical developments and of new policy priorities defined by the Council.
- Providing technical advice/support for the definition of benchmarks and/or quantitative targets in view of preparing the annual Employment Guidelines.

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Aspects of work organisation

The main discussions of the IG take place during its scheduled meetings. In order to facilitate the discussion and to allow Members to prepare adequately for the meeting, documents should be sent in due time. The debate can be further helped by posing in advance specific questions for discussion of individual agenda items.

Written procedures can be helpful in the follow-up to meetings and/or when agreements have to be reached before the next scheduled meeting.

On some occasions, thematic working groups and seminars can be organised in order to have more detailed discussions on certain topics that require deeper focus and discussion.

On certain statistical issues it can also be useful to have Members report to the Group about statistical practices and interesting sources/indicators from their countries.

Moreover, individual Members or small groups of Members may be called upon to produce short descriptive or analytical discussion papers on indicators related or thematic issues.

Co-operation in the development of other relevant indicators in other processes

In the context of the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy and the JAF, enhanced coordination is required between actors in different policy areas. In terms of the Employment Strategy, this is particularly relevant for co-operation and exchanges of information between the EMCO Indicators Group and the various technical Groups with similar tasks in other, related areas. In particular, these include the EPC Group which deals with the Lisbon Methodology evaluation (LIME) to enhance consistency between our work and macro-economic monitoring, the Social Protection Committee sub-group on indicators (ISG) in the context of the Joint Assessment Framework, DG EAC's Standing Group on indicators and benchmarks (SGIB) especially with respect to measuring of the education headline targets and its impact on and by the labour market, as well as the Eurostat Working Group on labour market statistics and labour market policy and the HoPES network with particular focus on their PES benchmark.

The multiplicity of parallel indicators work underlines the need for the Indicators Group to ensure that, as far as possible at the technical level, consistency and coherence are strengthened through co-operation with the other relevant groups. It also reinforces the need for members of the group to strengthen consultation and co-operation with EMCO delegates, as well as with their counterparts at national level. The Indicators Group will build on and seek to strengthen its established links with the relevant groups during 2012, and will also improve the cooperation with other bodies, including CEDEFOP, Dublin Foundation, and international organisations such as ILO and OECD.