



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 27 January 2012

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SOC 60**

NOTE

from: General Secretariat of the Council
to: Delegations

Subject: Summary record of the meeting of the European Parliament **Committee on
Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL)**, held in Brussels on 25 January 2012

The meeting was chaired by Ms Bérès (S&D, FR).

1. Election of the chair

Ms Bérès (S&D, FR) was elected as Chair by acclamation.

2. Election of the 1st vice-chair

Ms Hirsh (ALDE, DE) was elected as 1st Vice-Chair by acclamation.

3. Election of the 2nd vice-chair

Ms Zuber (GUE/NGL, PT) was elected as 2nd Vice-Chair by acclamation.

4. Election of the 3rd vice-chair

Ms Schroedter (Greens/EFA, DE) was elected as 3rd Vice-Chair by acclamation.

5. Election of the 4th vice-chair

Mr Mann (EPP, DE) was elected as 4th Vice-Chair by acclamation.

Ms Bérès, Ms Schroedter and Mr Mann were re-elected, while Ms Hirsh and Ms Zuber replaced respectively Ms Lynne (ALDE, UK) and Ms Figueiredo (GUE/NGL, PT), who have just recently stood down as Members of the European Parliament.

6. Presentation of the Council Presidency's programme¹

Exchange of views with Danish Ministers:

Ms Mette Frederiksen - Minister for Employment

Ms Karen Haekkerup - Minister for Social Affairs and Integration

In their introductory speeches both Ms Frederiksen and Ms Haekkerup underlined the excellent relations between the Council and the European Parliament. They both stated that it was important to guarantee social balance, workers' rights, proper education, and adequate labour skills. They called for the support of younger and older generations in order to address youth unemployment and the needs of older workers, who had to be kept in the labour market due to the increase in the life expectancy of the European population.

Ms Frederiksen informed the Committee that the Council would discuss youth unemployment in February and that Member States were expected to address it in their National Reform Programs (NRPs). She listed some of the Presidency's priorities, such as: the Posting of Workers Directive (PWD); the regulation of collective action in transnational situations; the European Globalisation Fund (EGF) Policy and the European Social Fund (EFS); and the minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to the risks arising from physical agents, also known as the EMF Directive. As regards the PWD, she advocated combining free movement with satisfactory working conditions. She explained that the EGF and the EFS should be used to fight long-term unemployment, while, on the EMF Directive, she underlined the progress made during the Polish Presidency and the additional time given by the Commission to facilitate a satisfactory agreement in the Council.

¹ Apart from the constituent meeting, this was the only agenda item followed.

Ms Haekkerup referred to the problems posed by European demographic trends. She told the Committee that this issue was a priority of the Polish, Danish and Cypriot trio and pointed out that 2012 was the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. Ms Haekkerup enumerated some of the priorities of the Danish Presidency, such as social changes and innovation, the Anti-Discrimination Directive, and changes to the Social Security Coordination Regulation.

In the subsequent exchange of views, Ms Frederiksen told Ms Rapti (S&D, EL) that the consolidation of the macroeconomic framework combined with the reduction of the administrative burden on SMEs could boost growth and employment, stressing that workers' rights had to be preserved. She told Ms Sinclair (EFD, UK) that , as far as helping the European Union out of the crisis and boosting growth and unemployment was concerned, the euro was part of the solution and not part of the problem.

She explained to Ms Lamberts (Greens/EFA, UK) and to Ms Harkin (EPP, IE) that negotiations regarding the EGF and the EFS were blocked in the Council, suggesting that progress could be made through informal discussions. On the PWD and seasonal work, she said that wage dumping should be avoided.

She told Ms Turunen (Greens/EFA, DK) that young people's needs had to be addressed at national level and drew the attention of Mr Christensen (S&D, DK) to the value of the Flexicurity model, referring to Denmark as a good example.

Mr Gutiérrez Prieto (S&D, ES) spoke of a lost generation and the existence of two parallel European labour markets (one stable and the other precarious), while Ms Zuber (GUE/NGL, PT) and Mr Cercas (S&D, ES) highlighted the deterioration of working conditions, adding that for the first time in many years rights were being lost.

Ms Haekkerup pointed out to Ms Blinkevičiūtė (S&D, LT) that the crisis should not be turned into a generational fight and that it was important to focus on solidarity, referring once more to 2012 as the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations.