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NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Delegations

Subject: Conferences organised during the Slovak Republic's Presidency of the
Council of the European Union Council (EPSCO)
- Information from the Presidency

Delegations will find attached information on the outcome of the conferences organised by the Presidency, with a view to the EPSCO Council on 8 December 2016 (AOB item).

Conferences organised during the Slovak Presidency

(in the policy fields covered by the EPSCO Council)

1. Thematic conference: 'Reconciling Work and Family Life in a Changing Society', 20 and 21 September 2016, Bratislava

The main aim of the conference was to facilitate expert discussion among all relevant stakeholders on current needs as regards reconciliation of work, family life and private life. The discussions were divided into independent strands focusing on specific themes and aspects of the reconciliation issue: flexible forms of work, women's participation in the labour market, innovative solutions in the fields of social care, care for older family members and other dependants, etc. Examples of best practices in the reconciliation of work and family life indicated possible solutions and existing options in this area.

2. High-level event: 'Empowerment of Roma Youth as a Driving Force behind Change', 9 to 11 October 2016, Bratislava

The conference provided a space for bridging supranational, national and local levels, by creating a single interactive space for young Roma to express positions and opinions on policies and directly to politicians dealing professionally with youth. The aim of this approach was to increase the participation of young Roma in youth programmes with a view to speeding up support for efforts to integrate Roma people in society. By attending personally, the European Commissioner for Justice, Věra Jourová, lent her support to increasing the involvement of young Roma people, as did Slovak Employment Minister Ján Richter and Justice Minister Lucia Žitňanská. The conference was organised under the auspices of the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities, with the active support of the European Commission. The outcomes of the conference were used in drafting the Council Conclusions on accelerating the process of Roma integration.

3. **Occupational Health and Safety conference: 'A better preventive culture in a new labour market', 24 and 25 October 2016, Bratislava**

A thematic conference on health and safety at work focused on raising awareness about occupational health and safety (OHS), workplace training and acquiring the skills to fulfil tasks and meet objectives in OHS, with the aim of managing new risks posed by new technologies, new forms of employment and an ageing workforce. The conference focused on trends and methods in strengthening OHS awareness, including school education, in-company training and workplace inspections to strengthen the culture of prevention. The conference also stressed social dialogue and communication between a company's employees and employers on the subject of OHS, which are effective tools for moving from compliance with the relevant regulations to voluntarily taking part in the practical implementation of an OHS culture of prevention.

4. **71st meeting of the Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC): 'Ageing Workforce and Changes in the Labour Market – role of labour inspection', 9 and 10 November 2016, Horný Smokovec (High Tatras)**

The main subject of the 71st meeting of the Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC) . was the challenges posed by the ageing workforce and changes in the labour market in connection with labour inspection tasks. The results of work on this subject were presented by representatives of several EU Member States, in particular as regards the ageing of the workforce in relation to working conditions, occupational disease and the protection of health at work. The discussions also covered the role of trade unions in ensuring proper working conditions for older workers. Current EU legislation and policy relating to the ageing workforce was also discussed.

5. Conference: 'Strategies for follow-up to the recommendations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities', 12 November 2016, Bratislava

The conference took place under the auspices of the European Disability Forum and the national umbrella organisation for disabled persons in Slovakia. The purpose of the event was to discuss the practical implementation of the recommendations addressed to the EU and its Member States by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The conference was primarily aimed at expanding knowledge bases and drawing up strategies and best practices for the implementation of these recommendations at EU and domestic levels, while bringing together organisations representing persons with disabilities, including member organisations of the European Disability Forum.

6. Conference: 'Social economy as a key player in providing effective answers to current societal challenges in the EU and the world', 30 November and 1 December 2016, Bratislava

Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico, Labour Minister Jan Richter and Commissioner for Employment Marianne Thyssen spoke at the conference. The Commissioner for the Internal Market, Elzbieta Bieńkowska, also participated actively by videoconference. The main theme of the conference was the issue of the social economy and the development of social enterprises in Europe, with a focus on their European dimension. The conference also provided a space for discussion of the recommendations published by the Expert Group on Social Entrepreneurship (GECES). The conference's main aim was to present best practices from those countries where the social economy best supplements the business sector and at the same time succeeds in helping to boost regional employment. One dimension of the conference was dedicated to the functioning of the new subjects of the social economy and related open questions, such as that of identifying risks in the establishment and functioning of those subjects. The conference theme responded to the current problem of the underdeveloped system for the social economy, which employs some 14.5 million people in the EU. The conference included the adoption of a final Bratislava declaration of EU countries at ministerial level on supporting the social economy in EU countries.