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**ECOFIN 447
UEM 175
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EMPL 330
COMPET 438
ENV 536
EDUC 255
RECH 207
ENER 249
JAI 532**

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

Subject: Draft Council Recommendations on the National Reform Programmes
2017 to each Member State
- Approval

In the context of the 2017 European Semester process, the Commission submitted the proposals for Country-Specific Recommendations (as listed in document 9261/17) to the Council on 22 May 2017.

The 27 documents (one for all Member States, except for Greece) were examined by the relevant committees (EMCO, SPC, EPC, EFC/EFCA). Certain issues of horizontal substance were also examined in joint meetings, with the aim of ensuring the consistency of the recommendations across the Member States.

The texts of the draft recommendations for each Member State, as resulting from the Committees' discussions, are set out in doc. 9281/17. The draft explanatory note on the "comply or explain" rule summarising the reasons for amendments, and taking into account the conclusions of the multilateral surveillance reviews, is set out in doc. 9564/17.

With regard to the outcome of the discussions in the EPSCO preparatory bodies, the Chairs of the Employment and Social Protection Committees have informed the Presidency about their Committees' positions on some recommendations. Their joint letter is to be found in the annex to this note.

Regarding the organisation of work at Council level, full consideration has been given to the cross-cutting issues to be discussed in both Council formations, EPSCO and ECOFIN. The latter will approve the economic/financial and MIP related parts on 16 June. These two Council formations need to synchronise their work with a view to providing joint input to the discussion at the European Council on 22-23 June.

Coreper is invited to examine the draft Recommendations set out in the country documents listed in doc. 9281/17, with a view to enabling the Council (EPSCO) to approve the employment and social policy related aspects of the draft Council Recommendations for each Member State.

The Country-specific Recommendations will be submitted to the European Council on 22-23 June 2016 for endorsement.



The Social Protection Committee
The Employment Committee
The Chairs

8 June 2017

Subject: Opinions of the EPSCO Committees on the Commission proposals for Council recommendations

Dear Ministers,

We have the pleasure to transmit for your approval the opinions on the draft 2017 Council recommendations (CSRs) for each Member State, as prepared in close cooperation by the Employment and Social Protection Committees. Each of our Committees has also prepared a horizontal opinion on the assessment of the employment and social aspects of the new CSR package as well as the implementation of last year's CSRs, which we are also transmitting for your endorsement.

Both the EMCO and the SPC have worked closely together, and alongside the ECOFIN committees, in providing these opinions, which are now sent to both EPSCO and ECOFIN. This collaborative effort was substantially aided by our preparatory work throughout the year carrying out multilateral surveillance reviews on the implementation of the 2016 CSRs, and through both the Employment Performance Monitor and the Social Protection Performance Monitor.

The committee phase leading to these opinions has seen positive and close cooperation with the Economic Policy Committee (EPC) on issues of shared interest. These opinions reflect in full the joint decisions taken together on 1 and 2 June 2017 by the EPC, the EMCO and the SPC as well as the decisions taken by the EMCO and the SPC at their joint meeting on 6 June 2017, when we addressed issues of EPSCO exclusive competence. They account for the views of the Education Committee whose representatives were invited to attend the EMCO meeting on 2 June when discussing CSRs related to education, skills, and lifelong learning.

EMCO and SPC also met with European Social Partners for an exchange of views on the 2017 CSR package. SPC held a similar exchange of views with social NGOs.

These final opinions that we submit to the attention of EPSCO ministers have taken the initial Commission draft recommendations as a starting point. We are pleased to report that all the changes made during our meetings were accepted by the Commission and agreed consensually.

We would personally like to thank the Maltese Presidency for their steering of the process. We hope these opinions provide a good contribution to the EPSCO Council policy debate in view of the June European Council.

Yours sincerely,



Tom Bevers

Chair of the Employment Committee



Ulrika Hall

Chair of the Social Protection Committee