



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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COVER NOTE

from: The Social Protection Committee
to: Permanent Representatives Committee (Part I) / Council (EPSCO)
Subject: Ex-ante coordination of major social policy reforms within the SPC
- Report of the Chair

Delegations will find attached a report by the SPC Chair on the application of the ex-ante coordination of major social policy reforms, with a view to the Council (EPSCO) meeting on 9 December 2013.



Ex-ante coordination of major social policy reforms within the SPC

- Report of the Chair -

The Council mandated the SPC to report on the application of increased ex-ante coordination of major reforms¹. Since September 2013, our work concentrated on a draft Code of conduct containing a set of guiding principles for ex-ante coordination of major social policy reforms within the social open method of coordination. This work is a contribution to the reinforcement of the social dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union. The draft Code of conduct is not a binding norm-setting document .

At the SPC meeting on 25th -27th November some members expressed the view that further political guidance was needed on this activity, before adopting the draft Code of conduct. Other Members found that the draft Code of conduct was ready for adoption and did not see reasons for any delay. The Committee decided to launch a feasibility test starting in January 2014 with some volunteering Member States presenting their plans for forthcoming social policy reforms.

The Committee will carefully study this first experience and take it into account in its future work.

The feasibility test will enable the SPC to provide evidence-based advice to Ministers on the application of the ex-ante coordination to the policy areas under the responsibility of the EPSCO Council. This approach is coherent with the work carried out by other policy Committees.

The synchronisation of the approaches across Committees is in line with the European Council conclusions from 25th October 2013² which called for further enhancement of the coordination of the economic, employment and social policies and for strengthened cooperation between the Council formations in order to ensure consistency of those policies.

¹ See Council conclusions on the Annual Growth Survey and the Joint Employment Report in the context of the European Semester : political guidance on employment and social policies from 28 February 2013, §7, Council document : 6462/13

² For a full reference see §38 of the European Council conclusions, document EUCO 169/13