



Council of the  
European Union

Brussels, 12 June 2015  
(OR. en)

9306/15

UEM 202  
ECOFIN 411  
SOC 374  
COMPET 283  
ENV 371  
EDUC 191  
RECH 179  
ENER 226  
JAI 386  
EMPL 246

**NOTE**

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

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Subject: Draft Council Recommendations on the National Reform Programmes  
2015 to each Member State  
- Approval

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In the context of the 2015 European Semester process, the proposals for Country-Specific Recommendations (as listed in document 9224/15) were presented by the Commission on 13 May.

The 27 documents (one per Member State (26) plus one for the Eurozone) were examined by the relevant committees (EMCO, SPC, EPC, EFC/EFCA). Certain issues of horizontal substance were also examined in joint meeting 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. 9229/15. 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. 9305/15.

With regard to the outcome of the discussions in the preparatory bodies for EPSCO, 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 19 June). These two Council formations need to synchronise their work with a view to providing joint input into the discussion at the European Council on 25-26 June.

Coreper is invited to examine the draft Recommendations set out in the country documents listed in doc. 9229/15, 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 and the one for the Eurozone.

The Country-specific Recommendations will be submitted to the European Council on 25-26 June 2015 for endorsement.



## The Employment Committee

*The Chairman*



## The Social Protection Committee

**The Chair**

Brussels, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2015

**Subject: Opinions of the EPSCO Committees on the Commission recommendation for Council recommendations.**

Dear Minister Augulis,

We have the pleasure to transmit to you the opinions on the draft Council recommendations (CSRs) for each Member State, as prepared in close cooperation by the Employment and Social Protection Committees.

Both EMCO and the SPC have worked closely together, and alongside the ECOFIN committees, in providing these final draft opinions, which are now sent to the two Council formations. In our context, this was substantially aided by our preparatory work throughout the year carrying out multilateral surveillance reviews on the implementation of the 2014 CSRs, and through both the Employment Performance Monitor that monitors key employment challenges, and the Social Protection Performance Monitor.

The opinions we submit to you reflect, in full, the decisions taken by EMCO and the SPC on the 28<sup>th</sup> May, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> June, when we addressed issues of EPSCO exclusive competence, and account for the views of the Education Committee and the Council Working Party on Public Health at Senior Level whose representatives were invited to attend the relevant EMCO or SPC meeting when discussing these CSRs. EMCO also took the opportunity at the beginning of the committee phase to canvas the views of European Social Partner Secretariats.

Furthermore, the committee phase leading to this opinion has seen a positive and close cooperation with the Economic Policy Committee (EPC) on issues of shared interest. These opinions consequently reflect in full the joint decisions taken together on 29<sup>th</sup> May between the EPC, EMCO and the SPC.

We would like to stress that this joint interaction is the only feasible and effective way of ensuring commonly reached compromise decisions from both the ECOFIN and EPSCO committees, thereby allowing for a meaningful discussion in both Council formations. With this in mind, we draw your and future Presidencies attention to the increasing coverage of structural reform issues falling under the Stability and Growth Pact Recommendations (SGP) in this years' CSRs. These include reform priorities which are the core competence of EPSCO committees and the implementation of which falls to EPSCO Ministers. This will require that in future European Semesters all these issues are dealt with in joint meetings of the EPSCO and ECOFIN committees. The current practice, whereby the EFC deals with all SGP issues without a joint meeting is not sustainable in that light.

These final opinions we transmit to the attention of EPSCO have taken the initial Commission draft recommendations as a starting point. Any changes to this draft proposed by a Member State have been included in this opinion if they were accepted by the Commission or if they received the quorum required. In order to strengthen the weight of this opinion, during the meetings we took an indicative test of support mirroring voting arrangements in Council under the special qualified majority for the decisions related to these Recommendations. The justifications for such changes can be found in the "comply or explain" annex.

Our committees also considered the Commission proposal for a Recommendation to Euro Area Member States. Our views on this initial proposal were sent to the Chair of the EFC immediately afterwards.

We would personally like to thank the Latvian Presidency for their steering of the process, and in particular your active support to maintain the prominent role of the EPSCO Council. 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



Thomas Dominique

Chair of the Social Protection Committee