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NOTE

from: Presidency
to: Delegations

Subject: Outcome of the conferences organised by the Latvian Presidency
– 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 18 June 2015 (AOB item).

OUTCOMES OF THE CONFERENCES
ORGANISED BY THE LATVIAN PRESIDENCY

Information from the Presidency

Employment Committee (EMCO) and Social Protection Committee (SPC) conference
"Inclusive labour markets in Europe: the role of improved job quality and enhanced inclusion" (3-4 February, 2015)

- 1) On 3-4 February, a joint EMCO and SPC conference took place in Riga. The conference focused on two issues that are currently topical in the field of employment and social policies: job quality and sustainable labour market inclusion, including the role of minimum income schemes.
- 2) In the first part of the conference, European social partners and experts expressed their views on job quality; selected EU Member States presented their national measures carried out to facilitate better job quality and the European Commission informed about recent analysis in this field. The second part of the conference aimed at assessing measures and activities that are important for reducing economic inactivity and facilitating inclusion into the labour market.
- 3) Representatives of NGOs and academics analysed the role of benefits and minimum income schemes for activating the unemployed. The usefulness of individual approaches as well as the impact and the role of integrated social protection and employment services for promoting inclusive employment were stressed. Similarly, attention was devoted to minimum wage in Europe and minimum income programmes in countries outside Europe by emphasising the need to strengthen the provision of integrated services and work towards promoting productive inclusion.
- 4) The results of the conference fed into the Council Conclusions "Moving towards more inclusive labour markets" adopted by EPSCO on 9 March 2015.

Presidency Conference "From the strategic framework towards effective implementation – OSH can be simple and entertaining" (27-28 April, 2015)

On 27-28 April, a Presidency Conference on health and safety took place in Riga. The conference was co-financed by the European Commission and focused on the aspects related to active implementation of the European Commission's Communication on the Strategic Framework for Safety and Health at Work (2014-2020). In addition, good practice award ceremony was carried in the framework of the European informative campaign *Healthy Workplaces Manage Stress*.

Follow-up to the conference Council Conclusions "EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020: Adapting to new challenges" were adopted by EPSCO on 9 March 2015.

The participants discussed further actions aimed at improving working conditions, in particular, in micro and small enterprises. Interactive tools (for example, games and applications), which could be used for improving the knowledge on occupational health and safety, including mainstreaming these issues into educational programmes, were presented in parallel to the plenary sessions. The second day of the conference focused on the practical aspects of efficient implementation of activities related to safety and health at work, including new methods of dissemination of information, use of social media and videos.

Conference "From Inclusive Education to Inclusive Employment for Persons with Disability" (11-12 May, 2015)

On 11-12 May, a High-Level Meeting on Disability took place in Riga. The event started with a meeting of representatives from the EU Member States' governments who informed about the latest developments and national measures implemented in the field of disability policy with a particular focus on inclusive education. The meeting was co-financed by the European Commission. After the meeting, a conference entitled "From Inclusive Education to Inclusive Employment for Persons with Disability" was opened.

The participants of the conference were addressed by Mr Nils Muižnieks, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr Yannis Vardakastanis, President of the European Disability Forum and other distinguished guests.

At the end of the conference, the Presidency Conclusions on disability were presented. The document highlighted the need for the EU Member States and the EU to work further to ensure the rights and freedoms of all persons with disabilities by fully implementing the principles defined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The following issues are also emphasised in the Presidency Conclusions: the improvement of support mechanisms; integration of children and youth with disabilities; provision of accessible education and suitable employment during the lifetime; development of assistive technologies (technical aids); efficient use of the EU Structural Funds for improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities and the strengthening of cooperation between the governmental and non-governmental sectors in order to represent and implement the interests of persons with disabilities.

Conference "Deinstitutionalisation Practises and Further Development of Social Care Policy in Europe" (15 June, 2015)

The conference "Deinstitutionalisation Practises and Further Development of Social Care Policy in Europe" took place in Riga on 15 June 2015. The conference was organised with the assistance of the EEA / Norway grants to continue the debate on high quality social services and social inclusion.

The conference focussed on the issues of deinstitutionalisation for persons with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities and children in out-of-family care. It provided a platform for exchange of experience among policy makers, policy implementers, social service providers and non-governmental organisations from European countries to facilitate mutual learning, identifying obstacles and transferring good practice. It also was an instrument contributing to raising public awareness and supportive attitude towards persons with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities.

The conference addressed the process of deinstitutionalisation as a human rights issue seeking ways for better support the move away from institutional care. The most appropriate and cost-efficient ways in supporting independent living and leaving institutional care were discussed. It included learning from the past and building vision for moving forward from the point of view of practical know-how and promoting strategies for local inclusive communities.

The results of the conference will be used by participating countries to advance further development of family and community-based care.