



Council of the
European Union

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7231/18
PV CONS 16
SOC 148
EMPL 110
SAN 87
CONSOM 70

DRAFT MINUTES
COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
(**Employment, Social Policy**, Health and Consumer Affairs)
15 March 2018

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1. **Adoption of the agenda**

The Council adopted the agenda set out in 6830/18. Item 8 d) "Revision of Directive 96/71 on Posting of Workers" was added at the start of the meeting.

2. **Approval of "A" items**

Non-legislative list

6964/18

The Council adopted the "A" items listed in 6964/18 including COR and REV documents presented for adoption. A statement related to these items is set out in the Addendum.

Non-legislative activities

3. **European Semester 2018**

a) **Priorities for action in the areas of employment and social policies: Political guidance in 2018**

72

i) **Joint Employment Report**

6255/18

ii) **Conclusions on the 2018 Annual Growth Survey and Joint Employment Report**

6570/18 + COR 1

Adoption

The Council adopted the Joint Employment Report as set out in 7168/18 and the Conclusions as set out in 7165/18.

b) **2018 Country reports**

72

6378/18

Presentation by the Commission

The Council took note of the information provided by the Commission.

4. **Investing in Youth Employment: Implementation of the Youth Guarantee**

72

6149/18 + COR 1

Endorsement of EMCO's key messages

The Council endorsed the EMCO key messages as set out in 6149/18 + COR 1.

5. **Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships** 6779/18 + ADD 1
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(Legal basis proposed by the Commission: Articles 153, 166 and 292 TFEU)
Adoption

The Council adopted the recommendation as set out in 7311/18. Latvia entered a statement to the minutes as set out in the annex.

6. **The future of social Europe post 2020** 6326/18 + COR 1
+ ADD 1
Policy debate

The Council held a policy debate on the "Future of social Europe post 2020" on the basis of a steering note set out in 6326/18. Ministers referred to the need for greater economic and social convergence, and pointed at the increasing levels of inequality within and between Member States. Many Ministers referred to the European Pillar of Social Rights as a compass for developing policies in the next programming cycle, some further emphasising that European funds should serve to support its implementation.

Member States identified as policy priorities: preparing the workforce for the changes induced by the digital transformation and the future of work; promoting employment, especially for young people and for women; supporting the integration of migrants and refugees; inclusion of the most vulnerable people and combating poverty; addressing demographic challenges.

Most Member States voiced the need to simplify the procedures and reduce the administrative burden in order to enhance the visibility of EU social investment. They also called to introduce more flexibility and to increase the efficiency of the ESF. Ministers also broadly agreed on preserving the current structure of the social funds (ESF, EGF, FEAD), some further calling for the ESF to be maintained as part of the cohesion policy.

7. **Closing the gender pay gap: Contributing to the achievement of the goals of the European Pillar of Social Rights**

6423/18

Policy debate

The Council held a policy debate on "Closing the Gender Pay Gap" based on two questions set out in a note from the Presidency (6423/18). Ministers outlined their most successful national measures for reducing horizontal and vertical gender segregation in the labour market; a range of different measures were mentioned, including in the areas of study and career guidance, awareness-raising, improving gender balance in management and combating stereotypes. Ministers also considered the best ways of increasing pay transparency across the EU. A number of Ministers described wage reporting obligations placed on companies that helped to make the gender pay gap visible. Several Ministers welcomed the Commission's recent Action Plan on Tackling the Gender Pay Gap. Some Ministers supported the idea of further Commission initiatives in the area, including the exchange of good practice, guidelines and technical advice. However, others preferred to address the issue of pay transparency at the national level.

Any other business

8. a) **Tripartite Social Summit**

6423/18

Information from the Presidency and the Commission

The Council took note of the information by the Presidency and the Commission on the preparations for the next Tripartite Social Summit of 21 March.

b) **Social Fairness Package**

6423/18

Information from the Commission

The Council took note of the information provided by the Commission.

- c) **Employment Committee (EMCO) and Social Protection Committee (SPC) Work Programmes 2018** ☐2 6572/18
6569/18
Information from the respective Chairs

The Council took note of the information provided by the EMCO and SPC Chairs on their Committees' respective work programmes for 2018.

- d) **Revision of Directive 96/71 on Posting of Workers** ☐2

This item was requested by the CZ delegation (7195/18) and added at the beginning of the session. The Council took note of the information provided by the Presidency on the state of play regarding the negotiations with the European Parliament.

☐2 Public debate proposed by the Presidency (Article 8(2) of the Council's Rules of Procedure)

(*) Item on which a vote may be requested

☐C Item based on a Commission proposal

STATEMENTS FOR THE COUNCIL MINUTES

Statements to legislative discussion items

Ad "B" item 5: **Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships**
Adoption

STATEMENT BY LATVIA

"Latvia supports the measures proposed to improve the quality and effectiveness of apprenticeships across the EU.

With a view to implementation and to avoid misintepretation, it is of importance to clarify the terminology used in the Council Recommendation. The term "apprenticeship" does not correspond to the terminology embedded in the national legislation of Latvia. The closest corresponding term to the content of this proposal in Latvian language is "*darba vidē balstītas mācības*", which means "work-based learning".

Terminology issues vis-à-vis Latvia were raised at the EMCO committee during the multilateral surveillace exercise when reviewing the Country Specific Recommendations. Broad agreement was reached that, as regards the situation and ongoing reforms in Latvia, the term "work-based learning" should be used."
