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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Presidency conferences
Information from the Presidency

Delegations will find attached the information note from the Presidency on the above subject, with a view to the meeting of the EPSCO Council on 10 December 2019 (Any Other Business item).

Outcomes of the Finnish Presidency; social and employment sector

The priority theme for the Finnish Presidency on social and health sector is Economy of Wellbeing; a holistic approach, emphasizing the mutually reinforcing relation of wellbeing and economic policies, as well as people's wellbeing as a value in itself. The Economy of Wellbeing was addressed in all the Presidency events organized by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

The priority theme of the employment and economic affairs sector on Finnish Presidency is sustainable growth: enhancing competitiveness of the EU in the global context, creating environmentally and ethically sustainable growth, and taking a modern, forward-looking approach for the digital era, with a special emphasis on skills.

High-level Conference on Competitiveness - Sustainable growth: skills and smart work organisation in the digital era, 3 July

Sustainable growth was at the centre of this conference on how to ensure the competitiveness and success of European workplaces in a rapidly changing business and working environment.

It was emphasized that in the era of digitalisation, increasingly fast technological development and global competition, it is important to respond to people's concerns about future prospects and employment, and to provide the conditions for Europe to stay competitive as the global competition is intensifying and traditional industries, enterprises and jobs are changing. The sustainability and manner of this change is a definitive area of interest for all parties included. Furthermore, we must provide everyone, including those in a weaker labour market position, with the necessary skills and capabilities while also ensuring that enterprises operating in global markets find the skilled workforce that they need. Many factors are likely to affect the productivity and quality of jobs in the future including how working is managed and organised.

Representatives of the Commission and Member states, social partners and businesses, as well as esteemed researchers and other specialists, joined to this versatile exchange of opinions and good practices regarding these questions.

High-level Forum on the Silver Economy, 9-10 July

The Forum discussed the policies related to the Silver Economy, under the umbrella of the Economy of Wellbeing. The Forum was driven by the positive approach towards longevity and the consequent demographic change. Ageing and demographic change is a global phenomenon that should be linked up with other contemporary megatrends: low birth rates, changing world of work, urbanization and technological development.

The event brought together international political decision-makers and public officials, representatives of international organizations, experts and researchers, and significant business operators from Europe, Asia and North America. The event was the first global high-level policy and economy forum on ageing with special focus on digitalization and deployment of new technologies.

More information and material on the Conference website:

<https://silvereconomyforum.eu/>

High-level Conference on the Economy of Wellbeing, 18-19 September

The Conference brought together high-level key stakeholders to generate cross-sectoral dialogue on the 'Economy of Wellbeing' approach. The discussions supported the drafting of the Council conclusions on the Economy of Wellbeing that were adopted by the EPSCO Council on October 24.

Under the umbrella of Economy of Wellbeing, the following aspect, e.g., were addressed: inequality and providing equal opportunities, investing in people's capabilities, building an inclusive economy in the framework of sustainable development and UN Agenda 2030, political next steps for the new European Commission.

On a very abstract level, the main messages of the conference were:

- Better communication of the interlinkage of economy and wellbeing is needed, also for the people not looking at the economy from the perspective of wellbeing.
- The need to have continuity on Economy of Wellbeing in different functions of the EU in the future.
- Economy of Wellbeing should be advocated beyond siloes, with policy coordination and cross-sectoral governance.

More information and material on the Conference website:

<https://eu2019.fi/en/events/2019-09-18/high-level-conference-on-the-economy-of-wellbeing>

High Level Conference Europe for Gender Equality: Taking Stock – Taking Action, 30 September and 1 October

The Conference discussed the challenges, priorities and directions for action of the EU gender equality policies in the next five years on the basis of the EIGE's Beijing +25 report and how links between economic and gender equality policies in the EU could be strengthened. The need to place gender equality high on the EU's political agenda and to have a high-level gender equality strategy, as well as the need to have long-term cross-sectoral cooperation at both political and administrative level were emphasized in the discussions. The implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the use of gender equality indicators in the context of the European Semester offer new possibilities for gender mainstreaming. Gender impact assessment and gender budgeting were seen as important tools to integrate gender equality into economic decision-making and to make gender inequalities visible in economic policies.

More information and material on the conference website

https://stm.fi/en/article/-/asset_publisher/korkean-tason-konferenssi-europe-for-gender-equality-taking-stock-taking-action-

You can also watch the video from the first day of the conference:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRFB-sWiCzo&feature=youtu.be>

European Vocational Skills Week: Guidance for Lifelong Learning Seminar, 17 October

This seminar, organized in relation to the European Vocational Skills Week 2019, brought focus to lifelong guidance as a transversal policy area, in response to the current debate of the demographic challenges, technological changes, future of work, globalisation and sustainable development. The seminar followed up the recommendations from previous EU interventions and lifelong guidance policy conferences, identifying key principles of effective and relevant lifelong guidance services. During the seminar policy developers, practitioners and stakeholders from lifelong guidance and relevant policy seminar identified potential, relevant EU interventions in repositioning and transforming lifelong guidance in the post EU2020 policies.

The main messages of the seminar were:

- Better sectoral co-operation between employment, education and social fields
- Paradigm shift from providing guidance services to enabling individuals to plan their careers
- Action plan for lifelong guidance under the European Pillar of Social Rights
- An EU level entity for lifelong guidance practice and policy development
- Defining common principles and guidelines for lifelong guidance
- EU competence framework for Career Management Skills (CMS)
- Conceptualising workplace guidance
- European level indicators for lifelong guidance
- Targeted funding for lifelong guidance systems and policy development

More information and material on the seminar website: https://ec.europa.eu/social/vocational-skills-week/guidance-lifelong-learning_en

Roadmap on Carcinogens Conference “Working together to eliminate occupational cancer”, 27-28 November

The Conference was part of the Roadmap on Carcinogens initiative that aims to raise awareness about the risks arising from exposure to carcinogens in the workplace and to exchange good practices. During the conference representatives of EU Member States, EU institutions and social partners discussed the Roadmap on Carcinogens campaign’s achievements and future challenges. Views were also exchanged on interfaces of chemicals legislation and OSH legislation, as well as on using biomonitoring to assess exposure to carcinogens at workplace. At the end of the conference a new covenant was signed to continue the Roadmap on Carcinogens campaign until the end of 2020 and the German Presidency