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NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Delegations

Subject: AOB for the meeting of the EPSCO Council of 19 June 2025:
Presidency events
- Information from the Presidency

Delegations will find attached information on the events organised by the Presidency, with a view to the EPSCO Council of 19 June 2025 (Any Other Business item).

INFORMATION ON THE EVENTS ORGANISED BY
THE POLISH PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. Informal meeting of Employment and Social affairs Ministers, Warsaw, 14-15 April 2025

EU Ministers of Employment and Social affairs met informally in Warsaw on 14-15 April 2025, alongside counterparts from the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries and from Ukraine. In addition, the meeting was attended by representatives of the EU institutions, the Chairs of the Employment Committee (EMCO) and the Social Protection Committee (SPC), as well as representatives of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), the European Social Platform, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and the European social partners.

On the first day, during the plenary session I: **Digital changes and algorithms in the world of work – Development of social dialogue, employees' right to information**, discussions focused on the growing impact of artificial intelligence and algorithms in the workplace. While acknowledging the benefits of new technologies such as increased innovation, safety at work and productivity, participants also raised concerns regarding the lack of transparency in algorithmic decision-making, the risk of bias and discrimination, the erosion of collective rights, and the risk of excessive employee surveillance.

One of the key points raised in the debate was the role of social dialogue in shaping the digital transformation. Ministers agreed that safeguarding workers' rights in this context requires the stronger and earlier involvement of trade unions and employee representatives in decisions concerning the deployment of AI. They also addressed the need for EU legislation– including the Platform Work Directive and the AI Act – to remain fit for purpose to guarantee workers' rights to information and consultation.

On the second day, during the plenary session II: **Active integration policy in the countries, participants** highlighted the fact that effective migrant integration depends on many factors besides access to the labour market and requires coordinated support in areas such as education, healthcare, and housing. There is also a need to improve public administration processes, including speeding up the recognition of professional qualifications and reducing unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles. It was also emphasized that integration is in the mutual interest of both migrants and the host state. While it is important that host countries offer genuine opportunities for migrants to integrate, they can also expect in turn a willingness on the part of migrants to adapt to societal norms and values. Well-designed integration policies can contribute to economic growth, foster innovation, and promote greater social stability.

The final plenary session III: **Equality in the Labour Market: Innovative Policies to Support Care Responsibilities**, addressed the persistent gender disparities in the labour market, particularly those arising from the unequal distribution of unpaid care work.

The discussion highlighted the need for flexible employment arrangements to promote a fairer division of caregiving responsibilities. In the context of the Work-Life Balance (WLB) Directive, particular attention was paid to the need for increased support for the so-called "sandwich generation" – people simultaneously caring for both children and elderly family members.

Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to advancing policies that promote equality in employment and support those balancing work and family responsibilities. The meeting ended with a declaration calling for continued joint efforts in developing innovative solutions for reconciling work and private life, as well as in strengthening labour rights in the era of digital transformation.

2. Informal meeting of Equality Ministers, Warsaw, 16 April 2025

An informal meeting of EU Ministers on the subject of equality was held on 16 April. The meeting was chaired by Minister for Equality and attended by Equality Ministers from the EU, Norway and Ukraine as well as the Commissioner for Equality, the President of the European Economic and Social Committee, representatives of the European Women's Lobby and the Wave Network, and the European Institute for Gender Equality.

The discussions focused on several issues:

Session I - Combating gender inequalities in the digital environment

In this session, the Ministers pointed out that while much has been achieved in recent years in the field of combating gender-based violence in the digital world, there is still a lot to be done at the EU and national levels. Particular emphasis was placed on the challenge associated with the creation of information bubbles, the polarisation of views regarding gender equality among young people, and its impact on their mental health. The Ministers also stressed the importance of including men as allies and beneficiaries of gender equality efforts, in response to the ongoing organised movement against gender equality that is clearly visible across the world.

Session II - Roma and misinformation

During the second session, the Home of the Borderland Foundation presented a report on disinformation and counteracting stereotypes about the Roma community. This topic was the starting point for a discussion about the tools available to member states to counteract misinformation.

Session III –Ensuring that no-one is left behind in European equality policies

The third session offered an opportunity to highlight the importance of anti-discrimination policies, including the existing and recently adopted legislation to be implemented in all countries of the Union, as well to have a discussion on the importance of the principle of intersectionality in future strategies and plans of the EU. Several Member States drew the attention to the gaps in EU legislation and suggested possible ways forward including advancing on the horizontal anti-discrimination directive.

During the conference, Poland, Denmark and Cyprus signed the Trio Declaration on gender equality.

3. High-level conference

The 'Equality, Europe!' conference on 23 June in Poznan will focus on assessing the current state of equality in Europe, with a particular focus on new institutional mechanisms. It will also serve as a platform for discussing solutions that can contribute to building a fairer society in the face of contemporary challenges, including artificial intelligence, the state of democracy, migration, the climate crisis and the evolving role of civil society. After a high-level introduction by the Polish Presidency, the conference will focus on the Roadmap for Women's Rights, adopted by the European Commission on 7 March 2025. The high-level panels will bring together Ministers, MEPs, European institution representatives, umbrella NGOs and researchers. The afternoon session, organised jointly with Polish NGOs, will include a series of talks on the subject of the conference.
