

SOCIAL AGENDA

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Final steps to enlargement
Employment strategy adopted

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Less than ten months until accession, the transposition of the EU's social legislation in the new Member States needs to be stepped up, with the focus on its proper enforcement. Compliance with this set of rules promises a range of benefits to the citizens of the ten accession countries, such as improved working conditions, reduced health and safety risks, increased life expectancy, and safeguards against discrimination. It will also create a level playing field for business across Europe, and cut the costs of non-social policies for the economy at large.

But making the enlarged Social Europe a success is not only about minimum legal standards. In the Union of 25, strengthening the integrated policy approach of the EU's 'Lisbon strategy' that builds on mutually reinforcing competitiveness, employment and social cohesion will be more vital than ever.

Enlargement will accentuate and diversify the EU's economic, employment and social challenges and thus reinforce the need for a co-ordinated policy response. Regional disparities will widen, as the average GDP per head in the ten accession countries will be less than half that of EU15. There will also be more social diversity, including ethnic minorities, particularly the Roma. Moreover, most new Member States face lower employment rates and higher unemployment than EU15 average, with particular problems for older or low-skilled workers.

Successful enlargement is, therefore, a top priority for the coming years of the Social Policy Agenda, the EU's roadmap to implement the Lisbon strategy of economic and social renewal – as was highlighted at its mid-term review last month.

The new employment guidelines respond to this challenge. They closely target key policy issues in the existing and the new Member States, such as activating the working age population, promoting the adaptability required to modernise economies, addressing the societal and regional labour market imbalances, and underpinning labour market reform with fiscal incentives.

Nonetheless, in the EU of 25 some of the challenges will become more complex. For example, rapid restructuring combined with traditional attitudes to economic and social change in accession countries will be a test case for the EU's approach to modernising the balance between flexibility and security. In most of these countries, little progress has yet been made in developing diversified employment patterns such as part-time, temporary or fixed term work and this is an obstacle to job creation.

Integrating the new Member States into the EU's open method of co-ordination will help them to move to a modern, more active employment and social policy. On the other hand, meeting the additional challenges of the enlarged Union will be the ultimate measure of the success of the Lisbon Strategy.

Thus, it is essential that the EU's own co-ordination structures are well prepared. The Commission's recent proposal for a streamlined framework in the social protection area is an important step forward in this respect – it will complement the structures of the 'Lisbon triangle' together with economic and employment policy co-ordination.

Odile Quintin

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Integration is the key to successful immigration: students at a vocational school in northern Amsterdam.

Making immigration work

The EU is seeing a growing recognition of the benefits of immigration and its importance in the area of employment

Over the past 10-15 years, immigration has taken on a new profile in most of the EU's Member States. The 1990s witnessed the largest flows since 1945: positive net migration reached a total of about 850,000 per year across the EU during the decade, and is estimated at 1 million for 2002. There has been a broadening of the types of migrants – with unrecorded peaks of asylum-seekers – and the countries they settle in. The Mediterranean Member States and Ireland, for example, have seen an increase in immigrants in recent years, while traditional destinations like Germany and the Netherlands continue to receive large numbers.

But while it is not a new phenomenon, recent years are seeing a change in the way immigration is viewed, with an increasing feeling that it offers potential benefits not only for immigrants, but for the EU as a whole.

With this in mind, the European Commission recently adopted a comprehensive communica-

tion on immigration, integration and employment. It reviews integration policies nationally and at EU level, looks at the role of immigration in the context of demographic ageing and suggests ways to promote integration.

The so-called 'push' factors that lead to immigration are well recognised: the growing polarisation both of income distribution and population trends throughout the world, with an ageing and rich north continuing to develop alongside a younger and poorer south.

But what is now becoming more striking is the 'pull' factor that is fuelling immigration. There is a growing acknowledgement that increased immigration flows are not only likely, but necessary. Demographic changes in the EU are leading to a rapidly ageing and shrinking workforce, and the fall in the number of employed people between 2010 and 2030 could be to the tune of some 19 million workers for EU-25. This would represent about 8.8% of the 2010 working population.

Because of low fertility rates, immigration has now become the main source of population growth in most Member States. Without immigration, Germany, Greece and Italy would have experienced a population loss and Sweden would have barely grown. As a result of demographic change, labour shortages may well increase across the board.

There is already evidence of the potential benefits of immigration. It is generally acknowledged that the positive economic effects of immigration into the US is one of the explanations for the long boom period in the 1990s. Several OECD countries have already adapted their regulations or initiated specific programmes to facilitate access to their labour markets for immigrant workers.

This is not to say that immigration is the solution to demographic changes, and the EU must first and foremost tap into its existing resources. Furthermore, the immigrant population is also ageing, so any 'immigration

boom' over the next decades would ultimately result in a similar situation as today, but at a later date.

Nonetheless, it is clear that immigration can play a significant role in helping to fill the current and future needs of the EU labour market, and contribute to spreading the effects of the demographic transition between 2010 and 2030 over a longer period of time.

For this to happen, it's important to achieve successful integration and to address the political concerns raised by immigration. The current situation is far from satisfactory. At 52.7%, the employment rate of non-EU nationals legally resident in the Union is significantly lower than the 64.4% rate for EU nationals.

As well as having higher rates of unemployment – almost 16% for non-EU nationals compared to 7% for EU nationals – immigrants tend to be over-represented in risky and low-skilled sectors and occupations. For example, their share of employment in manual jobs is higher for all types of qualifications than EU nationals, and almost twice as high for unskilled manual labour.

The picture is even worse for women, who account for nearly half the immigrants entering the EU every year. The employment rate for non-EU women is about 41% in the EU in general, and as low as 18% in some countries.

Especially worrying is the fact that the situation is particularly serious for 2nd and 3rd generation descendants of immigrants, who are more likely to remain jobless.

An obvious obstacle to the successful integration of immigrants is discrimination. In a recent Eurobarometer survey, where respondents claimed to have witnessed discrimination, the grounds most often cited (22%) were race or ethnic origin.

Discrimination extends to the political world too. The increase in immigration flows, as well as the growing diversity of cultural and religious origins, have had a clear impact on domestic politics. A number of Member States have seen a rise in populist parties, that call for tougher policies towards immigration.

Of course, successful integration is a two-way process. It requires adaptation from the migrants as well as the host societies. Increased respect for cultural and religious diversity is vital, as is raised awareness about the positive effects that immigration can have. Integration in the labour market is also an essential condition for successful integration into society. It in turn is dependant on other variables, in particular educational attainment.

For its part, the EU can play a significant role in supporting the integration efforts of Member States.

Firstly, it can create a common set of core rights – and obligations – and establish a common ground for immigrants to settle and integrate. The Commission, in its communication on immigration, underlines the importance of civic citizenship and nationality as tools to facilitate positive integration.

Secondly, the EU endeavours to promote dialogue and cooperation with third countries on migration issues. This is essential to create 'win-win' dynamics to the benefit of all: the migrants, the host societies and the countries of origin.

Thirdly, the EU has developed initiatives that, directly or indirectly, support the integration of immigrants. For example, the European Employment Strategy – the main tool to give direction to and ensure co-ordination of the

employment policy priorities to which Member States should subscribe at EU level – and the European Social Inclusion Process, which is working towards fighting poverty and social exclusion. There is also the financial support of instruments such as the EQUAL initiative, under which €127 million is available for actions aimed at combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market for the period 2001-2006.

At the EU summit in Greece on June 20, the European Council endorsed proposals to further develop a common policy in the area of immigration, frontiers and asylum, addressing a wide range of issues which include the integration of legal migrants into society and steps towards a common European asylum system. It also noted the Commission's concern that extra financial resources are needed for these policies.

Finally, the EU can play a role by passing on the right message about the role of immigration, stressing the positive economic impact, as well as its importance as a great source of cultural and social enrichment.

Further information:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2003/jun/immigrant_en.html

Where do immigrants come from?																
% of non-EU nationals living in the EU by citizenship in 2000																
	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	EU
<i>Women</i>																
CE Europe plus ex-USSR	11.8	27.5	37.5	82.3	7.2	8.0	16.2	26.9	52.1	12.2	66.4	5.5	71.3	37.9	8.6	27.1
Turkey, Malta, Cyprus	19.8	13.9	40.4	7.0	0.2	8.0	10.5	0.1	0.9	27.4	21.1	0.0	1.4	3.9	2.8	21.8
Other Europe	0.5	13.2	1.2	0.4	1.8	1.0	0.0	0.6	4.6	2.3	0.9	0.0	3.5	12.8	1.6	1.6
Africa	48.7	10.8	3.3	1.7	32.9	67.7	0.0	28.3	13.6	27.9	1.0	70.3	6.1	8.0	18.1	22.1
Others	19.2	34.5	17.6	8.5	57.9	15.3	73.3	44.1	28.8	30.1	10.5	24.2	17.1	37.5	68.9	27.4
<i>Men</i>																
CE Europe plus ex-USSR	7.7	26.8	31.7	81.0	9.9	6.6	26.8	23.3	56.4	7.4	63.7	6.8	59.1	28.3	6.7	23.9
Turkey, Malta, Cyprus	17.5	11.7	44.5	2.9	0.2	8.9	3.5	0.5	0.0	31.0	23.3	0.0	6.2	7.2	5.4	25.3
Other Europe	0.8	15.6	0.8	0.1	0.3	0.8	0.0	0.8	4.3	2.0	1.2	0.4	0.9	13.4	1.1	1.3
Africa	57.1	6.5	5.8	4.6	43.0	69.5	0.0	40.5	13.7	34.5	1.7	70.0	13.5	7.9	18.1	24.3
Others	16.9	39.3	17.2	11.4	46.6	14.0	67.7	34.9	25.6	25.1	10.3	22.9	20.2	43.2	68.7	25.2

Source: Eurostat (Statistics in focus - Theme 3 - 2/2003)



Indian researcher in biotech-lab at Jena university, Germany. More female immigrants need to be encouraged to join the labour market.

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EU adopts blueprint for national employment policies

The revised employment strategy provides specific advice for each of the Member States to help them successfully implement the employment guidelines

The first five years of the European Employment Strategy saw the creation of 10 million new jobs in the EU. Employment grew to 64% in 2001, compared to 61.3% in 1998, and unemployment stood at 7.4% – its lowest rate for more than a decade.

But a review of the strategy revealed the need to make it more focused and results-oriented, in the light of accelerating social change, an uncertain economic climate and enlargement. In early June, following on the heels of the European Commission's proposal for a revised employment strategy, the Council agreed to the proposal for updated employment guidelines, which set out 10 priorities for action, accompanied by specific targets and individual recommendations to each Member State.

The recommendations provide a focus for the Member States, highlighting the most serious and urgent problems each country needs to

deal with in order to successfully implement the employment guidelines.

A look at the recommendations gives an insight into what the main shortcomings are in the EU in general. Despite the fact that Member States have made some steps towards closing the gender pay gap and improving the employment rate for women, one of the priorities that comes up the most frequently is gender equality, which figures in a majority of the countries' priorities. Lifelong learning and labour supply and active ageing are also set down as recommendations for nine of the 15 Member States.

With regards to gender equality, a major challenge appears to be insufficient and expensive childcare facilities. Of the 10 countries singled out for improvements in women's participation in the labour market, eight of them are advised to improve the provision of affordable

childcare in order to facilitate a better reconciliation of work and family life.

The continuing pay gap is also a problem, even in countries where the female employment rate exceeds the EU target, such as the Netherlands and the UK. The recommendations to a number of Member States stress the need to improve the balance in representation between women and men across occupations and sectors.

An ageing population and dwindling labour forces are also challenges for most countries, and nine Member States – Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Austria, Finland, Sweden and the UK – were asked to address this issue by stimulating labour supply.

Member States are advised to take certain measures in order to ease the problem. Two issues come up most frequently in the recom-



Raising employment rates among older workers is of special concern, particularly in an enlarged Union.

mendations. Firstly, the need to increase employment rates by promoting labour market participation, particularly of older workers and women, is stressed. Although employment rates have improved considerably in many Member States recently, with employment growing in 2001 to an overall rate of 64% of the working-age population, the challenges posed by demographic ageing call for measures aimed at making full use of labour potential to increase participation rates.

Older workers represent an untapped source that could help push up the employment rates. With this in mind, a number of countries are urged to review early retirement pension schemes and promote incentives to remain in the work force.

The recommendations highlight some other measures to solve the problems of labour supply. Sweden, for example, is advised to sustain the availability of labour in the long term by fully exploiting all potential sources, in particular through an increased participation of immigrants. Meanwhile, there is a significant part of the labour force in long-term sickness or disability in the UK, the Netherlands and Sweden, and these countries are urged to address this problem by reforming the relevant schemes.

A further recommendation addresses the issue of lifelong learning, which includes improving the education systems to reduce the level of school drop-outs, and increasing opportunities

for training workers in enterprises. According to a 2001 Eurobarometer survey, 19.4% of young people in the EU leave school without attaining secondary-level education. Under the new employment guidelines, this should be reduced to 10% by 2010. The survey also revealed that 8.4% of the workforce had followed some kind of education or training activity. This should be increased to 12.5% by 2010, in line with the guidelines.

Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, Anna Diamantopoulou, stresses that the five years of the European Employment Strategy have brought significant improvements, and EU labour markets have become more cohesive and resilient. "However, the new EU of 25 must still create 22 million more jobs by 2010 in order to achieve the Lisbon prize of full employment."

Although the Commission doesn't impose sanctions, the recommendations are effective as concrete guidance to the Member States, and an invisible 'peer pressure' spurs individual countries to modernise their labour markets. With the increasing diversity that enlargement will bring, their role will become even more important in the future.

Further information:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/employment_strategy/recomm_en.htm

OVERVIEW OF EMPLOYMENT RECOMMENDATIONS 2003

POLICY PRIORITIES	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	EU
UNEMPL. PREV-ACTIV.	1		1			1							1		1	5
JOB CREATION							1	1								2
CHANGE-ADAPTABILITY			1	1	1			1								4
LIFELONG LEARNING			1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1				9
LABOUR SUPPLY/AGEING	1	1				1		1	1		1		1	2	1	10
GENDER EQUALITY			1	1	1		1		1	1	1	1	1		1	10
DISADVANTAGED		1														1
MAKING WORK PAY	1	1	1	1						1				1		6
UNDECLARED WORK				*				*								
REGIONAL DISPARITIES	1				1											2
SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP						1						1			1	3
DELIVERY SERVICES				1	1			1								3
TOTAL	4	3	5	5	4	4	3	5	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	55
Ref, recommendations in 2002	5	2	5	6	5	5	3	5	3	2	3	3	3	3	4	57

* UNDECLARED WORK : integrated in "job creation" (IT) or "making work pay" (EL)



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"Roma are Europeans too" – in the enlarged Union they will be one of the biggest ethnic minorities.

How do Europeans feel about discrimination?

Survey underlines the need for continued action to raise awareness, while information campaign is launched to underpin efforts to address problem of discrimination

Only one in three Europeans would know their rights if they were to be discriminated against. That is one of the main findings of a recent Europe-wide survey that looks at attitudes towards discrimination in the EU.

The survey comes at a time when the EU is making substantial efforts to tackle the issues of discrimination. By the end of this year, Member States must complete the implementation of two new EU directives, adopted in 2000, banning discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, age, disability and sexual orientation. This legislation requires fair treatment for people in the workplace, while the rules on racial and ethnic equality also cover education, access to social security and healthcare, the provision of goods and services and housing.

The survey, which was carried out by Eurobarometer, underlines the need for further progress. It stresses that while the majority of people in the EU oppose discrimination, it is still a widespread problem and further work is vital.

For the survey, around 16,000 EU nationals, aged 15 and over and residing in an EU Member State, were interviewed. People were asked about their attitudes towards and experiences of discrimination, in the workplace, education, in seeking housing or in accessing various services, and on the grounds of race or ethnicity, religion or beliefs, age, disability and sexual orientation.

The survey revealed that a lack of awareness regarding anti-discrimination legisla-

tion and rights is a considerable problem. Only about a third of people questioned said that, should they be harassed or discriminated against in accessing commercial services, they would know their rights. About half said they would not.

Awareness of rights varied according to nationality, education and occupation. On the whole people with higher education and in professional and managerial positions were more likely to say they knew their rights. Belgians, Austrians, East Germans and the Danish were least likely to know their rights, while the Finns were the most likely.

When it came to general attitudes, the overall results were fairly positive, with the vast majority of people surveyed saying they

were opposed to discrimination on all grounds and under all circumstances. The majorities were slightly smaller in the case of discrimination against intellectually disabled people – though interestingly not physically disabled.

Where respondents reported personally experiencing discrimination, the most frequently cited ground was age (EU average of 5%), followed by racial or ethnic origin (3%), religion or beliefs, physical disability, learning difficulties or mental illness (2% each) and sexual orientation (less than 1%).

The Dutch, with 7%, were the most likely to report discrimination on the grounds of racial origin and ethnicity. They were followed by Luxembourg (6%) and France (5%). In Spain, Italy, Finland, Ireland and Germany, meanwhile, the figure was just 1%.

Interestingly, while age was the major reason cited by people who reported personally experiencing discrimination, when it came to respondents' perception of what might hinder someone else on the labour market, older applicants were only seen as the third most disadvantaged group. People with learning difficulties or with a mental illness were

thought to be the most disadvantaged, with 87% saying they believed they would have less chance than others. With 77%, people with a physical disability made up the second group perceived as disadvantaged, followed by applicants over 50 years old (71%) and ethnic minorities (62%).

On the whole, people displayed less faith in the attitudes of their fellow European citizens, and felt that others would be more likely than they were to approve of discrimination. A considerable number claimed to have witnessed some sort of prejudice. The largest group – more than a fifth – had witnessed discrimination on ethnic grounds. This was particularly true in the Netherlands, where the figure was as high as 35%, as well as in Sweden (31%) and France (28%).

The figures show that considerably more people reported being a witness to discrimination, rather than on the receiving end. But it's important to note that the survey did not include non-EU citizens, who would be more likely to suffer from ethnic or racial discrimination.

It's also important to note that a high rate of respondents reporting to have witnessed prejudice in a particular country does not

necessarily mean that discrimination is a bigger problem there. In some cases, it can simply indicate national, social or cultural factors that engender greater public awareness. For example, the kinds of people most likely to say they've experienced discrimination (either personally or witnessed) are young people and people with leftist political views – both groups that are most likely to say they oppose discrimination.

In addition to the young and people on the left of the political spectrum, women, the non-manually employed and people with higher education are also more likely to oppose discrimination.

In conjunction with the survey, the European Union launched a five-year, EU-wide information campaign to raise awareness of discrimination in all 15 Member States and to support measures to combat it.

The main focus of the first year will be employment, with an emphasis on promoting diversity and combating discrimination in the workplace. The information campaign, which will run with the slogan 'For Diversity. Against Discrimination', will use events, seminars and media activities as well as posters and brochures to get the message across.

Fighting discrimination is largely about changing people's attitudes. It is hoped that the survey results and the awareness campaign will contribute to a better understanding of the problems, and bring the EU closer to its ultimate goal of stamping out discrimination and unfair treatment.

Further information:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/fundamental_rights/index_en.htm

'For Diversity – Against Discrimination': Commissioner Anna Diamantopoulou launches the EU-wide information campaign in Brussels on June 16, 2003.



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Employment and social issues are key to enlargement

Adapting to EU policies will help improve labour market reform, work conditions and social inclusion in the new Member States

The accession of ten new Member States is now less than ten months away. Referenda held in these countries have revealed strong popular support for what will be the EU's largest enlargement ever.

This is possibly the greatest challenge yet for the European Union. Candidate countries still have much to do to restructure their economies, adapt to the rules and standards that underpin the EU and reform their institutions accordingly. Furthermore, the EU itself must adapt – not least by reforming its institutional structure in order to make an enlarged Union work effectively.

But enlargement is also a great opportunity. It offers enhanced political stability and security. This in turn will make it possible for countries to take full advantage of the internal market and to attract the foreign investment necessary to ensure innovation, employment and sustainable, long-term economic growth.

Employment and social issues are key to the enlargement process – and high on the list of priorities of these new citizens. According to a recent Eurobarometer survey in the candidate countries, fighting unemployment (80%) and poverty and social exclusion (77%) were seen as two of the most important policy areas that the EU should focus on.

To realise these expectations, the transposition of the EU's employment and social legislation into these countries' national statute books still needs to be stepped up.

But employment and social policies are not just another of the myriad of EU membership obligations. The European Union has developed binding rules on working conditions, equal opportunities and health and safety in the workplace. Adapting to the EU's policies in this area could lead to an improvement in labour market reform, work conditions, health and safety, social dialogue, gender equality and social inclusion.



Polish women at a polling station in Wrocław. Referenda in the acceding countries have revealed strong popular support for enlargement.

Previous enlargements have demonstrated the potential benefits that accession can bring new Member States. Portugal, for example, raised its living standards from 55% of the EU average to 75% in just 15 years. Spain increased its performance from 75% to 85% in the same period. Ireland even surpassed the EU average GDP level, leaping from 70% to over 120%.

While these examples are encouraging, the scale of the current enlargement is unprecedented, and brings with it far greater economic discrepancies and diversity than before. For instance, the average income level of the ten accession states will be less than half of the average GDP per head of the current Member States.

So while the long-term benefits could be substantial if the appropriate policies are followed, economic convergence will be not be a quick or an easy task.

Addressing low employment rates in many of the accession countries will be a major challenge. Enlargement will slightly reduce the EU's average employment rate – from 64.3% in EU15 in 2002 to 62.4% for EU25 – even though some accession

countries have employment rates above the EU average, for instance the Czech Republic at 65.6% and Cyprus at 68.5%. But the employment targets set out at the March 2000 Lisbon Council for 15 Member States remain the same for all 25 countries, calling for extra efforts from all.

Still, the integration of the new Member States into the Lisbon Strategy is already well underway. Preparations for their participation in the EU's Employment Strategy and the Social Inclusion Process have involved particularly close co-operation. The accession countries have gradually started to mirror the Employment Strategy, drawing up so-called Joint Assessment Papers, or JAPs, which contain commitments on employment policy priorities in the run-up to EU membership.

Gender equality is another area in which the new Member States stand to benefit from enlargement. Apart from adopting the broad range of EU legislation in this field, accession countries can already participate in the gender equality programme, which will promote women in decision-making in 2003, and finance projects to combat gender roles and stereotypes in 2004.

Enlargement also offers potential benefits, and considerable challenges, in the domain of working conditions – raising job quality for workers in the accession countries, and creating a level playing field for business across the EU by providing a uniform set of minimum standards.

Improving health and safety at work is one major element of quality at work. Offering security for workers while helping businesses to reduce costs from work-related accidents and diseases – an area in which candidate countries could make significant improvements.

Life expectancy in the new Member States, which is currently lower than the EU average, is also something that stands to benefit from enlargement. In Hungary, for example, the average life expectancy for men is 67.2 years, compared to 75.3 for EU 15, and 75.7 years for women, compared to 81.4 years for EU 15. Citing recent research, Hungary's State Secretary for Health and Social Affairs Zsuzsanna Jakab estimates that the full implementation of health-related EU regulation (including health and safety at work, environment etc.) would increase the average life expectancy of the Hungarian population by two to three years within ten years.

While the transposition of the EU's complex health and safety directives into the national laws of the accession countries is in the final phase, the effective

application of these legal provisions causes most concerns. There is still a widespread lack of understanding of the EU's global prevention approach to avoid and eliminate risks. Overall, most efforts seem to be needed in small and medium-sized businesses and enterprises producing exclusively for the domestic market. Building up a strong relationship between employers and unions will also play a key role in enhancing working conditions.

The EU is providing €21.7 billion to the future Member States over the period 2004-2006. This will cover a broad range of investments through the EU's structural funds – including the European Social Fund (see accompanying article on page 12) – in economic development, employment, and regional and social cohesion.

One way in which this enlargement will distinguish itself from previous enlargements is the extent of diversity that it will bring. A major challenge in the social field will be the discrimination that is faced by ethnic minorities – in particular the Roma. Research carried out in 1995 by UK-based NGO Minority Rights Group International, estimated that there were between 1.3 million and 1.5 million Roma in the countries acceding next year.

An element that has featured strongly in public debate on accession is labour mobility in an enlarged Union. Some fear huge influxes of peo-

ple from new Member States following enlargement. However, labour mobility is likely to be moderate to limited. According to a recent study, there will be an expected upsurge just after the accession period – some 250,000 people per year – which will then decline again to fall below 100,000 people per year before the end of the decade. In order to cope with this, transitional arrangements on the freedom of movement have been agreed with eight of the acceding countries (see accompanying box).

The impact of enlargement on the employment and social situation will need to be closely monitored. And while the next enlargement becomes reality, preparation for the accession of Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey continues.

It is clear that the accession countries have chosen to sign up to a constitutional framework, in which the improvement of social standards forms an important part. The correct application of the EU employment and social affairs legislation is crucial, and specific attention will need to be paid to this issue in the coming years.

Further information:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/enlargement/index_en.htm

TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENT FOR THE FREE MOVEMENT OF WORKERS

Specific transitional arrangements for the free movement of workers have been agreed with all acceding Member States except Cyprus and Malta. These arrangements provide the following:

- There will be no free movement for two years
- A first review will take place after two years on the basis of a Commission report
- Member States must then notify the Commission whether they will lift the transitional arrangements and apply Community law, or whether they will continue with the transitional arrangements for a further three years
- There may be one further review if requested by the new Member State
- After five years, transitional arrangements will end
- Unless Member States show serious disturbances (or threat thereof) of the labour market, in which case two further years are possible
- There will be the possibility for current Member States which have lifted the transitional arrangements to invoke a safeguard clause and re-impose restrictions if there are serious disturbances (or threat thereof) of the labour market
- Austria and Germany allowed a safeguard clause (during the period when they apply the transitional arrangement) to restrict freedom of cross-border supply of services in certain sensitive sectors (e.g. construction, industrial cleaning) if there is serious disturbance in the sectors concerned
- There will be reciprocal restrictions between a new Member State

and any current Member States that maintain restrictions vis à vis that new Member State

- As long as one current Member State retains transitional measures in relation to one new Member State, the new Member States may have recourse to a safeguard clause as between themselves if there are serious disturbances (or the threat thereof) on the labour market due to workers from another new Member State
- No transitional arrangements apply to Cyprus and Malta, except for the possibility for Malta to invoke a safeguard clause (and thus re-impose restrictions) if it experiences serious disturbances on its labour market

People from the new Member States who are legally working in a current Member State at the time of accession, with a contract for twelve months or over, will have free access to the labour market of that Member State, as will their family members.

There are no transitional arrangements in respect of groups other than workers (tourists, students, pensioners etc.), nor in respect of the Community provisions on the co-ordination of social security schemes. The transitional arrangements have been agreed by all the present Member States and now form part of the draft Accession Treaty which was signed on 16 April 2003.

Further information:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/negotiations/treaty_of_accession_2003/index.htm

Clearing the last hurdles to accession

The clock is ticking on ensuring the full and timely transposition of EU employment and social affairs legislation ahead of enlargement

The long haul from application to accession is nearly over for the 10 countries joining the European Union in May 2004. All of them have made huge advances in transposing EU legislation onto their own statute books. They are also preparing to incorporate the European social model. This entails participating in the co-ordination of employment, social exclusion and social protection policies and promoting social dialogue. However, with less than a year left, some gaps still remain.

The ten countries must transpose and enforce EU labour law, which covers workers' involvement in industrial change, working conditions and the information and consultation of employees. Several countries, such as Hungary, Slovenia, Cyprus and Slovakia, have made significant advances but others, such as Estonia, are falling behind.

Health and safety at work is another area where monitoring is essential. The EU policies are a key means of reducing both accidents and the costs associated with them, as well as providing a level playing field for businesses. In this respect, the role, capacity and skills of labour inspectorates are crucial if policies are to be implemented in the workplace. Some traditions, such as paying compensation to employees for working in dangerous conditions need to be eliminated.

Gender equality rules have to be applied. Many obstacles remain in the workplace or, in some cases, before women even get there. In Latvia, for example, it is still permissible to ask a woman at a job interview if she is pregnant. Once women are employed, their opportunities remain restricted. Underground and night work are two areas where several countries deny women equal opportunities.

The acceding countries also have to implement the EU's anti-discrimination directives, which cover discrimination on the grounds of ethnic and racial origin, religion or belief, age, disability and sexual orientation. However, there are risks of delays in the transposition process in several countries. Particular efforts are needed to pro-

mote the integration of minority groups, especially the Roma.

Most of the acceding countries have a low employment rate compared with the EU average. It is particularly low for the unskilled. Moreover, the high unemployment rates in countries like Poland and Slovakia, where figures range from 18% to around 20%, remain cause for concern. Even in the countries where there are relatively low rates of unemployment, like Slovenia, it is important to ensure that the long term unemployed and the inactive can be encouraged back to work with 'make work pay' policies. Other employment initiatives identified by the Joint Assessment Papers (JAPs) signed by the 10 countries and the Commission include investing in human resources, reinforcing public employment services, addressing regional disparities and gender inequalities, reducing the informal economy and enhancing the role of social partnership in modernising the labour market.

Tapping the potential of groups which are under-represented in the workforce is particularly important. In Malta, for example, just 32% of the female workforce is employed. The employment rate of older workers is low in Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Poland and Malta and the employment rate of

older women is particularly low in Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia. The Roma are also notably exposed to unemployment.

The Commission is preparing with each future Member State a Joint Inclusion Memorandum (JIM) to identify key challenges and policy responses to combat poverty and social exclusion. Several countries' governments are already committed to taking proactive steps in this area, such as Poland, Slovenia and Malta. All dimensions of poverty have to be dealt with, including health issues as most of the countries have low life expectancy, especially the men. The social exclusion of specific groups, such as the Roma, in countries such as the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary must also be better addressed.

The main resource of future Member States is their workforce. Improving skills and human capital is therefore crucial to their economic performance, as well as their social development. The European Social Fund is the major EU instrument to support employment and social inclusion efforts, and in particular active labour market policies. Negotiations on the overall strategic approach and the allocation of the ESF is a central part of preparations (see article on page 12).



Director-General Odile Quintin visiting a neighbourhood populated mostly by Roma during a recent visit to Hungary.



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The European Social Fund will help workers to adapt to industrial change

Most of the 10 countries have recognised the importance of autonomous social dialogue between workers' and employers' representatives and tripartite social dialogue which also involves government. Social dialogue is the best way to modernise working relations with a view to providing both flexibility and security for

workers and companies whilst avoiding costly disputes. While tripartite social dialogue structures function smoothly in nearly all of the acceding countries, autonomous social dialogue between the social partners needs to be strengthened and promoted.

This overview is, of course, little more than a snapshot of the accession countries' progress. The Commission's monitoring report, to be published in the autumn, will provide more detailed analysis.

To see the 2002 report, please consult the following web address: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/candidate.htm>

Meeting the challenge of social cohesion

EU structural funds to accession countries aim to help narrow some of the economic and social disparities

Leveling social and economic differences in the European Union is one of the EU's priority aims, and it has allocated €213 billion to the Structural Funds – its main instruments for supporting social and economic restructuring – and the Cohesion Fund for the period 2000-2006.

As things stand, the most important issue is the move from 15 Member States to 25, which will present an unprecedented challenge for the competitiveness and internal cohesion of the EU. A number of economic, social and labour market challenges are common to all parts of an enlarged Union: adapting to the knowledge society and to the difficulties associated with economic and social restructuring; achieving high employment rates and pursuing equality of opportunity.

While the intensity of these challenges within regions and Member States already varies significantly in today's Union, it will do so even more after 2004. Figures show that the gap in per capita GDP between people living in the most prosperous regions and those in the least prosperous ones will more than double following enlargement – with the poorest regions concentrated in the new Member States. In the enlarged Union, some 25% of the total population will live in regions with a per capi-

ta GDP below 75% of the EU average, which is currently the threshold for defining the so-called Objective 1 regions, or regions that are lagging behind. As a result, 67 regions will fall below this threshold, compared with 48 at present.

Through the European Social Fund, the longest established of the structural funds, the Commission is providing some €60 billion over the period 2000-2006 to projects across the EU. The overall goals of the ESF are the development and improvement of employment, educational and vocational training delivery systems.

These priorities can be grouped around four main themes. Firstly, promoting and improving active labour market policies: employment rates in candidate countries are on average lower than in the EU, with employment in agriculture and industry over-represented to the detriment of the services sector. Another goal is improving the effectiveness of public employment services and labour market institutions in the candidate countries, which often have few employment offices outside major cities. Improving the quality of education and training systems is also key, due to a general under-representation in high-skilled, non-manual jobs. Another priority is to address the inequali-

ties between women and men in the labour market, notably the issue of gender segregation.

The allocation of EU funding in the accession countries is now entering a decisive phase, with negotiations to define the use of EU structural funds taking place.

The setting up of adequate structures for management, implementation and control of the structural funds will be a major challenge for the accession countries, since such structures are a necessary precondition for the reimbursement of funds by the Commission from the date of accession.

Future financing of cohesion policy will need to take into account the unprecedented scale of economic and social disparities in an enlarged Union and the intensive, long-term nature of the effort required to reduce them. The Third Cohesion Report, which will be adopted in November 2003, will set out the Commission's position on the future of the funds after the current six-year period of funding expires in 2006.

Further information:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/esf2000/index-en.htm



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A demonstration by Belgian healthcare workers - the right to strike is in the EU's draft constitution.

EU Convention pushes for fundamental rights

The EU's first constitutional treaty will offer more transparency and progress in the area of social policy

At the EU summit in Greece on June 20, former French president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing presented Europe's leaders with an outline of the EU's first constitutional treaty. The proposals drawn up by the 105-member strong European Convention, chaired by Mr. Giscard d'Estaing, were met with approval by the summit and will form a sound basis with which to begin the Intergovernmental Conference that is set to start in October.

The need to reform the European Union and its treaties has grown more pressing in recent years. It has become clear that many bottlenecks exist in the EU's policy-making process, and that enlargement threatens to worsen some of the existing problems. The European Convention, with representatives from the 15 EU Member States and 13 candidate countries, started its discussions on the future of the European Union in February 2002 with the

aim of drawing up a Constitution for the enlarged Union.

In general terms, the main achievements of the Convention have been to launch the process of constitutionalising the Union, clarify a system which was at times made obscure by the different arrangements imposed at successive intergovernmental conferences, improve the Union's democratic attributes and its relations with European citizens, and push ahead with European integration in certain fields, such as the areas of freedom, security and justice.

On the other hand, some shortcomings still exist. For example, the continuing complexity of the institutional system – which risks being exacerbated by innovations such as the new function of President of the European Council and the dual status to be held by Members of the Commission – and the continued existence of unanimous vot-

ing in the Council in around 50 subjects.

Incorporated in the draft constitution is the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which was agreed by the EU in December 2000. This covers a wide range of rights, from equality between women and men, to the right to strike and the freedom to choose an occupation and conduct a business.

In the area of social policy, the provisions of the draft constitutional treaty represent a significant step forward. The Union's objectives stress the necessity of working towards full employment and social progress. They also underline the importance of combating social exclusion and discrimination, promoting social justice and protection and equality between women and men.

Of particular importance is the fact that employment policy has been upgraded.

Employment is now placed on the same level as economic policy and the door is open for co-ordination. This is an important step, as employment was classified in a previous draft as a subject that fell under supporting action only. The draft constitution calls for the Union to take up measures to ensure co-ordination of the employment policies of Member States, in particular by adopting guidelines for these policies. Furthermore, the way is paved for the co-ordination of Member States' social policies.

The draft constitution also brings a number of changes to voting rights. Attempts to curb the use of national vetoes have resulted in some tough battles in the past, but the fear remained that – particularly in an EU with 25 members – the need for unanimity could result in a paralysis in decision-making.

In the social policy field, Article 42 – on coordination of social security provisions for migrant workers – goes from unanimity to majority voting. Meanwhile, the Nice status quo prevails both for article 137, on social pol-

icy, and for Article 13, on anti-discrimination. For the latter, it was felt that some of the issues touch upon questions that are directly incorporated in some of the Member States' constitutional provisions.

The draft constitution also confirms and enhances the role of social partners, and the importance of autonomous dialogue between employers and unions. The EU recognises the part social partners play at Union level, while taking into account the diversity of national systems.

The principle of participatory democracy is also underlined. Citizens and representative associations shall have the opportunity to make known and publicly exchange their views on all areas of Union action. Furthermore, the Union institutions shall maintain a regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society. The draft constitution stresses that no fewer than one million citizens coming from a significant number of Member States may invite the Commission to submit any appropriate proposal on matters

where citizens consider that a legal act of the Union is required for the purpose of implementing the constitution. A European law shall determine the provisions for the specific procedures and conditions required for such a citizens' initiative.

One important aspect of the draft constitution is that it proposes measures to increase the transparency and efficiency of the EU, by developing the contribution of national Parliaments to the legitimacy of the European design, by simplifying the decision-making processes, and by making the workings of the European institutions more transparent and comprehensible.

The convention's draft will be further negotiated at the Intergovernmental Conference, which will be launched in October and concluded no later than 1st May, 2004.

Further information:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/index_en.htm

<http://europeanconvention.eu.int/bienvenue.asp?lang=EN>

MODERNISING THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL MODEL

The Social Policy Agenda was launched in 2000 as the EU's roadmap for implementing the Lisbon Strategy which aims at economic and social renewal and a return to full employment. The European Commission's recent mid-term review of the Agenda shows that it is on course. With the EU facing economic slowdown and governments grappling with unemployment and pensions reform, the value of Europe's social model, centred on investing in people, is greater than ever. The challenge now is to update it. Failure to do so will cost us dear, both in the current EU-15 and in the enlarged European Union of 25.

The focus is on obtaining the desired results. This means ensuring that the body of social legislation that has been adopted is now implemented, in all 25 present and future Member States. This is equally important in the new Member States and in the existing ones in improving conditions for workers and providing a level playing field for business. One particularly important aim is to get more women into jobs to meet the Lisbon target for female employment of 60 % by 2010 (compared to the current rate of 55.5% in 2002).

The Commission has seized the initiative by demonstrating the added value of quality in Europe's social model. It sees social policy as a productive factor, emphasising that it is a necessary investment and highlighting the future costs of not having social policy. Quality social policies mean, for example, fewer fatal accidents at work, fewer occupational

diseases, longer life expectancy and therefore higher productivity. Some 500 million workdays are currently lost annually in the EU as a result of work-related injuries and diseases. Poor or unsafe working conditions are estimated to cost the EU economy around 3% of GNP a year. Research suggests that a 1% increase in workforce training leads to a 0.3% increase in productivity. A year's on-the-job training has been shown to increase wages by as much as 5%.

The Commission has heralded new actions between now and 2005 for the Agenda's six main policy areas endorsed at the Nice Summit in 2000. These areas are: more and better jobs; balancing flexibility and security on the labour market; fighting poverty, exclusion and discrimination; modernising social protection; promoting gender equality; strengthening the social policy aspects of enlargement and promoting social policy in the EU's international relations.

The Commission is also devising new forms of governance for social policy. The open method of co-ordination used for employment and social policies steers policy-making by the Member States. Its use of peer group pressure has already been successful in reforming labour markets, fighting poverty and looking at pension systems.

Further information:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/social_policy_agenda/social_pol_ag_en.html



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Getting women into the ICT sector – and keeping them there... a web teacher with young participants in a web-site building course in Amsterdam.

Women still lagging behind in the knowledge society

Despite the opportunities ICT offers women, it also reinforces existing hierarchies and discriminations

In many respects, the information society seems to hold the answer to a number of the barriers facing women in the workforce. Computers allow more flexible working schedules with the possibility of working from home, and new ways of balancing professional and family life. Furthermore, the Internet opens up new opportunities for women to network and build up contacts.

But the information society has yet to fulfill its potential, and in many ways has actually reinforced existing gaps and discrimination.

A conference on gender and the information society that took place in Athens in early May underlined the message that the knowledge society will not, as some hoped, automatically

break down the gender barriers. It stressed that, if Europe is to attain the goal set out at Lisbon in 2000, of becoming the world's most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based society, then it cannot ignore an untapped potential like the one that women represent. Political action and initiatives will be needed to break down the gender divide and bring more women into the information technology sector.

At the moment, women lag behind men both as users and producers of information and communication technology. An EU average of 45% of the female population are computer users, compared to 55.5% of men, according to a 2002 Eurobarometer survey. When it comes to Internet use, a divide can be seen too, with 35% of women using the net compared to 45%

of men. The picture is more positive in the US, where 51.7% of active Internet users are women and the number of female web-surfers is growing faster than the overall Internet population.

Technology production is even more overwhelmingly male-dominated. ICT technology professions are only about 15% female, according to WWW-ICT, a European project aimed at bridging the gender gap and improving equal opportunities in these jobs. And the numbers tend to thin out even more in the upper echelons of firms in this area: A study carried out by the Cisco Learning Institute shows that the level of female participation in Internet networking professions in Western Europe is only 6.1%.



Not just a man's world: a female air traffic controller checks her radar screen and gives instructions to pilots. But she's still one of very few women in this kind of profession.

The 'masculine' image of ICT professions does not reflect the diversity of the knowledge society, however. What's more, new and emerging professions are seemingly more gender equal than traditional ICT areas such as hardware production: web designer, for example, or multimedia integrator. Nonetheless, attitudes, practices and behaviours in the ICT labour market appear to – consciously or unconsciously – promote, perpetuate and reproduce traditional discrimination and inequalities.

Much of the problem is rooted in persistent sexual stereotypes and preconceptions about 'male-oriented' professions – which can act as a deterrent to women. The Dutch Emancipation Monitor 2002 highlighted a marked difference in self-confidence between the sexes with regard to computer use: In general, boys and men consider themselves more skilful, and this lack of confidence on the part of girls and women can hinder them in building up ICT knowledge. Women are far less likely to embark on an education in information technology: data show that, although women in the EU Member States obtained nearly 40% of all new PhDs in 2000, their share was only 20% in engineering and 19% in computing.

The attitudes that lead to this are often determined early on in life, through experiences at school, in the home or through the media. Images and stereotypes are not only the consequence of insufficient female participation in the ICT industry, but also a cause, acting as an exclusion factor and creating a certain 'vicious circle'.

Education can play an important role in breaking this down. ESDIS, a group composed of Member States' representatives that supports the European Commission in the analysis of the impact of the information society on employment and social cohesion, recommends making curricula more attractive to girls and raising awareness about the routes into ICT careers. This could be done through publicity and marketing drives, improving the structure and content of courses and closer links between education and industry.

It's not just getting women into the ICT sector that's important, however. It's keeping them there. A report of the Women in IT Champions Group shows that the major problem is retention, rather than recruitment. The glass ceiling and motherhood are cited as major reasons women leave. But another factor is lack of confidence, and a perception of their ability that does not adequately reflect their actual competence.

Nonetheless, considerable progress is being made in the EU, with gender equality taking a key place within the framework of the European Employment Strategy and the Social Inclusion Process.

Concrete projects are being funded by EQUAL – an initiative funded by the European Social Fund that tests new ways of tackling discrimination and inequality experienced by people in work and people looking for a job. For example, "Gender Mainstreaming in der Informa-

tionsgesellschaft" in Berlin has adopted a "biographical" approach to gender mainstreaming in the information society. A range of subprojects target the crossroads in women's path of life, where otherwise a pattern of gender segregation might be established. This includes guidance and hands-on experience for girls to explore the Internet and master computer skills and digital literacy training for mature women with no or low formal qualifications. Through training and work experience placements unemployed university graduates are supported to become experts in knowledge management, and a programme for women immigrants prepares them to act as ICT trainers and role models for peers in Berlin's ethnic communities.

To open up careers for women in male domains of the labour market, the JIVE Partners project in the UK is creating resource centres in four different regions of the country. The centres provide guidance, training and mentoring, and offer for instance a high-level training scheme for women to become Microsoft Certified Systems Engineers. At the same time they are working with companies to address issues of recruitment and retention of female employees in the ICT sector.

Another EQUAL project – CALYTECH – gathers more than 30 partners in Andalucía around the common aim of facilitating women's access to new technologies through an integrated counselling, training system and business network to support the adaptability of SME's.

But despite these and other efforts, major challenges still remain. Overcoming the disadvantages and barriers that women still face in the knowledge society will allow women to fully enjoy the benefits that ICT can offer. But it will also benefit the ICT sector itself, for an industry dominated by men is only using half of the available talent and creativity and can never realise its full potential.

Further information:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/knowledge_society/library_en.htm#shc

European Conference on "Gender and Information Society" website

<http://www.equalitycongresses.gr/index-ng.html>

GENERAL

■ 2 June:

The Commission adopted its Mid-term Review of the Social Policy Agenda, the EU's roadmap translating the Lisbon strategy for economic and social renewal into concrete employment and social policy measures over the first half of the decade. This review places successful enlargement at the top of a renewed social policy

agenda and throws the spotlight on achieving results through compliance with EU agreed social standards in the existing and the new Member States.

■ 20-21 June:

The Thessaloniki Summit brought to a close an impressive Greek Presidency, whose achievements included a number of major economic and social reforms. EU leaders

endorsed the Employment Guidelines and the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines, as well as a review of progress since the Spring Summit on the Lisbon Strategy. The European Council also endorsed proposals to further develop a common policy in the area of immigration, frontiers and asylum, addressing a wide range of issues which include the integration of legal migrants into society.

EMPLOYMENT AND EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

■ 16-17 May:

Over 600 delegates from 28 countries attended the first ever European forum on local employment on the island of Rhodes, Greece. The conference was organised as part of a wider effort to enhance the regional and local dimension of the

EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY, HEALTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS COUNCIL, 3 JUNE 2003

The most recent Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council, which took place in Luxembourg on 3 June, reviewed the proposal from the European Commission for a directive on the working conditions for temporary workers, and agreed on the new guidelines and recommendations for the revised European Employment Strategy (EES). The purpose of this updated strategy was to establish a clear direction for European Union policy coordination in this field for the years ahead as part of its aim to ensure the success of the Lisbon strategy which aims at full employment.

A more results-focused European Employment Strategy

The EES, launched at a special employment summit in Luxembourg in 1997, promotes the convergence of labour market policies and structural improvements to EU labour markets. For the first time, the Council discussed the EES and the new guidelines in conjunction with the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines (BEPG), so that a more streamlined approach to employment and economic issues could be politically endorsed at the European Council on 19-20 June.

The Council agreed on the Commission's new proposal on the EES that should result in the effective delivery of more and better jobs, as well as an inclusive labour market, in the EU.

The approved guidelines set out 10 priorities for action in the Member States. These priorities are backed up, wherever practicable, by a series of specific targets, against which progress will be measured. In addition, individual recommendations to each Member State setting out what its reform priorities should be, are outlined. Both the Council and the Commission called on the social partners to intensify their efforts in the push for reform of the European Employment Strategy.

A total of 55 employment recommendations for Member States, were agreed in order to provide a country-specific focus for the implementation of the employment guidelines. As in previous years, the recommendations single out certain issues for each country including the following:

- labour supply and creating the conditions for older workers to keep working
- gender equality

- lifelong learning
- helping the unemployed and inactive to find a job
- reform of employment services to prevent long-term unemployment

No decision yet on temporary workers' directive

At the same time, the Council was unable to reach an agreement on the Commission's proposal for a directive giving minimum protection to temporary agency workers or 'temps'. Under the proposal, temporary workers would benefit from fairer working conditions, as regards pay, and restrictions that currently exist on temp workers in certain EU countries would be lifted. The European Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs Anna Diamantopoulou expressed her disappointment at the failure of the Council to come to a political agreement on this and recalled the deadline set by the March 2003 European Council to reach agreement by the end of the year.

Major step forward on social security for migrant workers

Within the framework of the Simplification and Modernisation of Regulation 1408/71 on social security co-ordination, Ministers reached a political agreement on Chapters 4, 5 and 8 of Title III dealing with invalidity; old-age and survivors' pensions; and special non-contributory cash benefits. This is a major step forward in light of the goal of final adoption of the entire dossier by the end of 2003. It will also support the further development of mobility of workers in the European Union.

Adoption of additional legislation

Based on a comprehensive preparatory work during the Greek Presidency, the Council also adopted:

- A Council Regulation on the Statute for a European Co-operative Society
- A Council Directive supplementing the Statute for a European Co-operative Society with regard to the involvement of employees.
- A Resolution on Social and Human Capital
- The Disabled People Resolution

European Employment Strategy, which comprises support for networking at European level, development and dissemination of experimental activities and good practice, the creation of new methodological and research tools, a new internet site and evaluation of local employment programmes and policies.

■ **3 June:**
The Council endorsed the Commission's proposals for a new, more results-oriented European Employment Strategy (see box on page 17).

■ **3 June:**
The Commission called on the Member States to step up their efforts to integrate immigrants. The communication on immigration, integration and employment predicts that labour migration to the EU will become increasingly necessary to fill job and skills shortages. It warns, however, that unless more effective policies are developed to welcome the migrants the EU needs, the immigrants will not be able to fulfill their potential nor make their full contribution to economic development. This means that the EU must not only do better to ensure their full participation in the labour

market, but also in social, cultural and civic life.

WORK ORGANISATION, WORKING CONDITIONS AND SOCIAL DIALOGUE

■ **13 May:**
The President of the European Parliament, Pat Cox, and Commissioner Anna Diamantopoulou put their weight behind the first pan-European campaign to reduce the risks of chemicals, biological agents and other dangerous substances at work – hazards that affect around a quarter of the EU's 150 million employees. The European Week on dangerous substances was launched by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work at the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

■ **23 May:**
In the framework of the sectoral social dialogue committee for the construction industry, the European social partners EFBWW and FIEC have issued a joint recommendation to facilitate the implementation of the working at heights directive (Directive 2001/45/EC of 27 June 2001), due to be transposed into national law by 19 July 2004.

■ **26-30 May:**
The European Trade Union Congress (ETUC) held its 10th statutory congress in Prague in order to mark the forthcoming enlargement of the EU. The congress, which was addressed by Commissioner Diamantopoulou, elected a new secretariat, appointing John Monks of the British TUC as Secretary-General. The congress also adopted its action programme for the next four years.

■ **2-3 June:**
Political agreement was reached on the proposal for a council decision setting up an advisory committee on safety, hygiene and health protection at work which streamlines existing bodies. The committee will assist the Commission in the preparation and implementation of activities in the field of safety and health at work and in facilitating co-operation between national administrations, trade unions and employers' organisations. The decision is expected to enter into force on 1 January 2004.

■ **2 June:**
National labour inspectorates across the European Union



A chemist wearing protective clothing at a pharmaceutical factory in Ljubljana, Slovenia. A EU campaign is focusing on dangerous substances at the workplace.

launched a pan-European campaign to reduce industrial accidents in the construction sector – the sector with the highest accident rates. The campaign will comprise awareness-raising activities, focused inspections and the evaluation and reporting of the

NEW PROPOSAL SIMPLIFIES EU POLICY CO-ORDINATION IN THE SOCIAL PROTECTION AREA

EU processes of co-ordination of social protection policies are to be simplified and rationalised, following the adoption in May by the European Commission of the communication "Strengthening the social dimension of the Lisbon strategy: streamlining open co-ordination in the field of social protection". Policy co-operation in this area, which broadly covers pensions, social inclusion, healthcare and care for the elderly, has grown rapidly since the Lisbon Council in 2000, and the proposal puts forward ways of making it more efficient and less burdensome on the actors concerned.

To achieve a rationalisation of co-ordination, the EU Member States will, under a new proposal from the Commission, define an integrated set of common objectives embracing social inclusion, pensions and healthcare for adoption by the Council in 2006. This more streamlined approach will be backed up by a sim-

plification of the reporting process, resulting in Member States feeding their national policy reports and action plans into a single Joint Social Protection Report, as of 2006 too. The Commission also proposes to establish an extended set of commonly agreed indicators that reflect the common objectives to ensure effective monitoring of actions.

Mandated by this Spring's European Council in Brussels, the proposal is part of the EU's initiative to add value, by helping governments to launch and implement reforms internally modernising the EU social protection model in the face of demographic ageing and globalisation.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2003/jun/streamline_socprot_en.html

results achieved. Reducing occupational accidents and illnesses in the EU is the main objective of the community strategy on health and safety at work 2002-2006.

PROMOTING AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

■ **1 June:**
Legally resident third-country nationals will be able to retain their social security entitlements when moving between Member States following the entry into force of Council Regulation 859/2003. Under this new regulation, they are now covered by the existing EU rules on the co-ordination of social security schemes for people who move within the Community (Regulation 1408/71).

Until now, a third-country national who works and pays social security contributions in one Member State and then moves to another where he/she works and pays social security contributions has been unable to benefit from the Community provisions that seek to ensure that a person does not lose out on social security entitlements as a result

of moving between Member States. In the past, this has resulted in the loss of contribution periods and the denial of entitlements to benefits.

■ **16 June:**
A five year EU-wide campaign to combat discrimination on the grounds of racial and ethnic origin, religion and belief, age, disability and sexual orientation was launched by Commissioner Diamantopoulou. The move came shortly before the deadline for implementation of two new EU directives on anti-discrimination in the Member States.

GENDER EQUALITY

■ **5-6 May:**
The European Commission and the Greek EU Presidency together stressed the importance of women playing a full role in building and participating in the information society by organising a European Conference on gender and the information society followed by an informal ministerial meeting in Athens.

■ **30-31 May:**
The Greek Presidency held two

experts' meetings in Athens on domestic violence against women and the trafficking of women. Participants from the Member States and the candidate countries discussed future initiatives in these areas.

THE EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DIMENSION OF ENLARGEMENT

■ **12-13 June:**
Commissioner Diamantopoulou visited projects in Romania financed by the European Union. The projects relate to the social integration of the country's largest ethnic minority group, the Roma, as well as to people with mental health problems and children with multiple disabilities. In talks with Romania's political leaders she reaffirmed the Commission's commitment to helping Romania to prepare for EU membership.

■ **23-24 June:**
Mrs Odile Quintin, the European Commission's Director General for Employment and Social Affairs, addressed a conference on civil dialogue and social policy in an enlarged European Union in

Budapest, Hungary. She stressed the EU's commitment to promoting civil dialogue at European level to help it form social policies that "meet the real needs of people."

■ **23-24 June:**
On a trip to Bulgaria, Commissioner Diamantopoulou visited the rehabilitation centre for a women's project on adolescents and children survivors of violence and a project for street children, financed by the European Union. She also discussed Bulgaria's preparations for EU membership with its political leaders, reaffirming the Commission's commitment to helping in this respect.

■ **29-30 June:**
Commissioner Diamantopoulou called on the current and future EU Member States to work together to tackle the social exclusion of the Roma at an international conference in Budapest, Hungary, on 'Roma in an Expanding Europe: challenges for the future'. She launched an appeal for greater cooperation between the EU, the World Bank and other international organisations and stressed the need to boost dialogue with Roma representatives.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

■ **3-6 September:**
European Asbestos Conference, Dresden (Germany)

■ **8-12 September:**
World Congress of the International Industrial Relations Association, in Berlin

■ **12-13 September**
Presidency conference on women and decision-making, in Syracuse (Italy)

■ **18 September:**
Presidency seminar on ageing and pension schemes, in Bologna (Italy)

■ **19 September:**
Official launch of the one-stop job-mobility portal and the European mobility information campaign, in Brussels

■ **29/30 September:**
OECD Labour Ministerial Meeting in Paris

■ **2-3 October:**
Presidency conference on health and safety in the workplace, in Rome

■ **8 October:**
Awareness-raising seminar on gender and health and safety at work, organised by the Commission's DG Employment, in co-operation with the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, in Brussels.

■ **9-10 October:**
Presidency conference on enlargement and industrial relations: building a new social partnership, in Modena (Italy)

■ **15-17 October:**
3rd EU/US joint conference on occupational health and safety, in Lemnos (Greece)

■ **16-17 October:**
Presidency conference on the role of family in social inclusion, in Turin (Italy)

■ **20-21 October:**
EU Council of Ministers for employment, social affairs, health and consumers' protection, in Luxembourg

■ **22 October:**
Presidency seminar on lifelong training, in Benevento (Italy)

■ **25-27 November:**
Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC) meeting, Rome

Recent publications



■ "Your social security rights when moving within the European Union – Update 2002"

This practical guide gives a brief description of the organisation and functioning of the social security system of each Member State. It also explains the conditions and formalities required of European citizens for entitlement to social security benefits when working or residing permanently or temporarily in another Member State. The booklet is available free of charge in the 11 official EU languages.

Catalogue No: KE-41-01-696-**-C; ISBN 92-894-2097-9 (EN); 92-894-2098-7 (FR); 92-894-2095-2 (DE)
http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-prot/schemes/secu_2002_en.pdf



■ "Promoting Diversity: 21 bodies promoting equality and combating discrimination in the European Union"

Drawn up on behalf of the European Commission under the Community Action Programme to combat discrimination 2001-2006, this report analyses the work of bodies acting to promote equality and fight discrimination in the Member States. It describes their strengths and weaknesses and encourages governments to take steps to ensure that their institutions have the necessary resources and independence to combat discrimination effectively. The study is available free of charge in English, French and German.

Catalogue No: KE-47-02-705-**-C; ISBN 92-894-4611-0 (EN); 92-894-4612-9 (FR); 92-894-4610-2 (DE)
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/fundamental_rights/pdf/legisl/mslegln/equalitybodies_exec_en.pdf



■ "Working together at local level for more and better jobs for all"

There will be over 100,000 municipalities in the new, enlarged Europe. The local level has now become an essential element for creating more and better jobs, achieving social cohesion and fostering democratic participation. This can be done through local employment strategies based on partnerships involving the greatest possible number of actors. The EU supports these efforts at both policy development and financial support level. This publication makes the case for local employment development within the European Employment Strategy and describes the EU contribution in this regard. The booklet is available free of charge in the 11 official EU languages.

Catalogue No: KE-47-02-406-**-C; ISBN 92-894-5076-2 (EN); ISBN 92-894-5077-0 (FR); 92-894-5074-6 (DE)
http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/local_employment/publi_en.htm

■ "Human capital in a knowledge-based world economy"

Commissioned by the Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs, this study explains the conditions required for investments in human capital to contribute to economic growth and the extent of their impact. It adds to a wider debate on the concept of "social capital". The study is available free of charge in English, French and German.

Catalogue No: KE-46-02-775-**-C; ISBN 92-894-4565-3 (EN); 92-894-4566-1 (FR); 92-894-4564-5 (DE)
http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2002/jul/report_final_fr.pdf

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 The home page of the Commission's Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/employment_social/index_en.htm
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