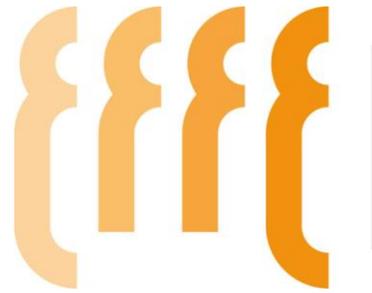


FEDERATION EUROPEENNE DES EMPLOIS DE LA FAMILLE



EUROPEAN
FEDERATION
FOR FAMILY
EMPLOYMENT
& HOME CARE

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MARCH 2018

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1. EUROPEAN BUDGET: progress report on the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) post 2020

WHAT YOU MUST REMEMBER

1. The Commission has rescheduled the presentation of the post-2020 MFF for the 2nd of May 2018.
2. The Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament gathered on the 7th of March and decided to set up two bodies to put forward its positions in the discussion on the next MFF.
3. Sweden does not wish to compensate for Brexit by limiting the next MFF to 1% of GNI and has therefore proposed significant budget cuts for CAP and Cohesion Policy, specifying them in a government document.
4. In Sofia, on the 9th of March, the Ministerial Conference on the MFF deeply highlighted the north-south and east-west divisions between Member States.

■ THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION WILL PRESENT ITS COMMUNICATION ON THE NEXT EUROPEAN BUDGET ON MAY 2ND

The Commission rescheduled the presentation of the post-2020 MFF on the 2nd of May 2018. According to what was announced, it will include a communication on the MFF, a regulation on the Financial Framework, the announcement of one or more instruments for own resources and a report on the results of evaluations concerning the "European added value". On the same day, the Commissioners will also discuss the third mobility package (including CO2 emissions for trucks) and an education program following the Gothenburg Summit.

Defense, migration and security will be the new budget priorities. At the press conference concluding the EU summit on February 23rd, President Donald Tusk said there was a consensus among leaders that the EU should spend more to fight illegal immigration, defense, security as well as Erasmus. For his part, the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, acknowledged that it would be necessary to reduce spending in the area of agriculture and regions.

■ EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT STRUCTURE FOR NEGOTIATION

The Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament gathered on the 7th of March and decided to set up two bodies to put forward its positions in the discussion on the next MFF. The negotiating team, which will represent Parliament towards the Member States, will be composed by the chairman of the Budget Committee (Jean Arthuis), and four MEPs involved on the subject (Jan Olbrycht, Isabelle Thomas, Gerard Deprez, Janusz Lewandowski). A contact group will also be created. Composed of representatives of each political family, he will assist the negotiating team. The composition of this group should be finalized by the end of March.

As for the content, the European Parliament has for its part decided not to choose between the new priorities and the traditional priorities. It will propose a budget of 1.3% of GNP, announced Jan Olbrycht (EPP, Poland). He said that this figure was simply achieved by maintaining agricultural and cohesion policies at their current level and increasing funds for education and SMEs.

▪ **MEMBER STATES CLARIFY THEIR POSITIONS, SWEDEN WANTS SIGNIFICANT REDUCTIONS IN BUDGETS FOR AGRICULTURE AND COHESION AFTER 2020**

Sweden is known to oppose to any increase of the European budget. The government calls for focusing European investments on cross-border public goods and achieving economies of scale, but especially by significantly reducing the envelopes for CAP and Cohesion. He believes that it is necessary to spend better with a tighter budget and tackle the shortcomings of the current European measures and programs.

Sweden would like to channel the Cohesion Policy towards the integration of migrants and the reintegration of people excluded from the labor market and to focus it on "regions with the greatest needs". It calls for a significant reduction of aid to the most developed regions and to avoid any transitional arrangements. However, the document stresses the need to cover the whole EU and to take into account regional specificities, for example a low population density (in Scandinavia, for example).

The Member State also wants a simplification of the rules at national and European level and proposes to return to pre-crisis co-financing levels, to give more responsibility to Member States. To do this, it stresses the importance of ex-ante conditions for structural reforms and proposes a differentiated system for monitoring the management of the Structural Funds on the basis of objective and measurable criteria of the rate for risk management.

The document also highlights the importance of territorial cooperation for its cross-border dimension, which clearly illustrates European added value.

REDUCTION OF CAP. Regarding to the CAP, Sweden is calling for a significant reduction in funding and an effective and simplified policy. Mandatory co-financing should be considered with the aim of transferring more responsibility to Member States. Regarding to audits and controls, they would like a risk-based approach and supports the idea of a system with a single audit. More generally, they want to put an end to transversal instruments, preferring to channel efforts towards targeted actions. Considering that the distribution of funding should take into account rural development and demographic parameters.

STRENGTHENING HORIZON 2020. The document calls for an ambitious framework program for research and innovation once Horizon 2020 comes to an end. The Swedish Government considers that selection criteria should be based solely on excellence, "regardless of geography, solidarity or justice". He believes that the next Framework Program should focus mainly on cross-border projects and those in the form of grants, and should support open science. In this context, the European Research Council should remain autonomous, according to Sweden, and the European Innovation Council should be included in the next Framework Program and focus on so-called "disruptive" technologies.

Sweden stresses the need to strengthen the conditionality of the next MFF for countries that do not respect common decisions on migration policy and the rule of law, two areas explicitly addressed by Poland, Hungary and, to a lesser extent, other states of the Visegrad Group.

FRANCE EVOLUTION ON ITS POSITION. Following to the European Council of the 23rd of February 2018, France announced its readiness to contribute more to the EU budget. President Macron explained that EU finances must "keep up to the moment we live, coherent and effective,

France is ready to increase this budget". A position that modifies the one previously defended by Paris, who did not wish to increase its contribution.

▪ AN IMPOSSIBLE CONCILIATION BETWEEN THE 27?

Member States have to solve the following equation: how, with the budget deficit linked to Brexit, can the new political priorities (security, migration and innovation) be financed without having to reduce too much the amounts reserved for traditional policies, such as that the CAP and Cohesion, which still represent almost 75% of the Community budget?

There are clearly two opposing groups.

- On the one hand, countries such as the Netherlands, Austria, Germany and Sweden are in favor of freezing or even reducing the CAP and the European Structural Funds in order to finance the new priorities, whose contours are, ultimately, indisputable. France, the biggest beneficiary of the CAP, is ready to modernize politics, but not to sacrifice it, said Nathalie Loiseau, Minister in charge of European Affairs, stressing its importance for EU food sovereignty and farmers' incomes. Denmark considers that by freezing the two largest expenditure items, an overall budget of 1% of gross national income (GNI) would then be sufficient to finance the new political priorities.
- On the other hand, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean countries want these funds to be preserved as much as possible. To do this, some of them, such as the Baltic States and Hungary, are asking for an increase in the size of the budget and are ready to increase their own national contributions.

Almost all Member States consider that there is a possibility for improvement in the way money is spent and flexibility in the use of credit in the EU budget.

The idea that it is possible to combine support for new priorities (for example the migration challenge) by using existing financial instruments, such as the Structural Funds, has been mentioned several times, among others by Spain and La France.

The idea of subordinating the allocation of European funds to respect for the rule of law or a trajectory of fiscal and social convergence is clearly on the agenda. The Netherlands is in favor, but Hungary and the Czech Republic are strongly opposed to this idea.

2. EPSCO COUNCIL: Member States agree on key post-2020 social goals, but less on ways to achieve them

WHAT YOU MUST REMEMBER

1. On March the 15th, the European Ministers of Social Affairs reached a certain convergence of views on the social objectives that the European Union should pursue after 2020: to support changes in the labor market, to mitigate the effects of globalization and demographic imbalances and the integration of migrants and refugees.
2. On the other hand, there are diverging positions on the various means of achieving these objectives, in particular with regard to the evolution of the European Social Fund (ESF).

Most of the Member States agree on the long-term main objective of ensuring social convergence, and they all refer to the European pillar of social rights adopted last November in Gothenburg. They emphasized the importance of supporting the evolution of the labor market to cope with the upheavals caused by globalization and technological revolutions (in particular artificial intelligence, empowerment and digital change), and demographic change. The European population and the workforce of some Member States are attracted by other Member States. This last point was particularly emphasized by some Baltic countries and those of Southern and Eastern Europe.

The issue of integration of newcomers and refugees has also been raised by many, as well as the issue of training and requalification of workers. The introduction of greater flexibility in the use of European funds in a timely manner and on the basis of territorial specificities, as well as their radical revision, in particular as regards controls, were also almost systematically mentioned.

Member States do not agree on how the European Social Fund (ESF) should develop. The Netherlands wants to merge funds related to social issues into a single fund dedicated to the development of human capital. This proposal recalls the one envisaged by the Commission. Hungary was strongly opposed to this idea. They want to maintain the autonomy of the various funds, such as Malta and France.

Some countries have proposed to focus on limited themes and Member States to increase the impact of interventions and the visibility of European action. On the other hand, other Member States, such as the Czech Republic, want the ESF to continue to cover all Member States. Several delegations - Poland, Hungary, Sweden and Denmark - emphasized the principle of subsidiarity in the social field. Poland said it was skeptical about the social dashboard, while Greece, on the contrary, emphasized its importance.

The European Council of 22 and 23 March will contain a mention of the future of social Europe, but no debate is expected. According to the draft conclusions, the EU28 will ask the Council to examine "quickly" the social equity package unveiled on March 13th.

CONTEXT REMINDER

On November 17th 2017, the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission proclaimed the European Pillar of Social Rights - 20 core principles and rights to promote the smooth functioning and fairness of labor markets and social protection systems. The Commission is already working on the translation of the Pillar into concrete actions, for example through the initiative on the work-life balance, the proposal for a directive on transparent and predictable working conditions in the labor market, or the next package of measures for social equity.

The European Semester offers a privileged way to oversee the process of economic and social convergence every year. Since the 2017/18 cycle, all the main documents of the semester integrate the principles and priorities of the Pillar. The draft Joint Employment Report in particular includes the new social scorecard that tracks the main indicators of the areas covered by the baseline, such as school drop-out rate, youth unemployment rate or the impact of social transfers. on reducing poverty.

3. EUROPEAN ELECTIONS: next meeting in 2024 for transnational lists

After the rejection of the project by the European Parliament on February 7th, there was little hope for transnational lists to be put in place for the 2019 European elections. The meeting of the Twenty-Seven at the European Council on February 23rd confirmed the trend, but the Heads of State and Government do not exclude to return to this point by the next election.

4. EUROPEAN COUNCIL: the Twenty-Seven don't seem ready to reform the composition of the Commission

At the European Summit on February 23rd, the leaders discussed the possibility of reducing the number of European Commissioners. The president of the executive, Jean-Claude Juncker, acknowledged that there was no willingness on the part of the states to go in this direction. Similarly, Heads of State and Government rejected the idea of merging the position of President of the Commission and President of the Council.

5. ITALY : M5S-centre-right coalition agreement - the XVIII legislature of the Italian Republic opens with CASELLATI and FICO as new parliament speakers

An agreement has been reached in the Italian Parliament over the election of the second and third highest offices of the State. Saturday, March 24, the new Deputies and Senators have, in fact, established who will lead the Italian Houses of Parliament during the eighteenth Parliamentary term which has just begun: the Senate elected Maria Elisabetta Alberti Casellati, an historical exponent of Berlusconi's party, the first woman to occupy the highest seat of Palazzo Madama, while the Chamber of Deputies elected Roberto Fico, exponent of the 5 Star Movement (M5S), the group that received most votes in the last March 4 elections.

FROM PARLIAMENT TO GOVERNMENT. After the agreement reached between the M5S and Center-Right Coalition on the Parliamentary Speakers, follows a phase of consultations with the President of the Republic which, after the Easter break, should lead to the birth of the new Executive. No group being numerically able to support a new government autonomously, one wonders if the Lega-M5S axis that allowed the election of the Chamber and Senate Speakers can be the solution for the birth of the new Executive. At the present time, the most probable solution is certainly that of a manifesto commitment between Center-Right and M5S rather than between M5S and the Democratic Party or between the Center-Right and Democratic Party. In particular, an Italian Grosse Koalition hypothesis seems highly unlikely after the poor performance of Forza Italia and the Democratic Party, parties more similar to the German CDU and SPD, which could have given life to such a coalition.

The stock markets showed no particular signs of tension and seem to agree to the most natural result, that is a Government composition by the winning parties. Even Europe, albeit with some fibrillation, relies on a stable Executive.

■ SOCIAL EUROPE

6. EMPLOYMENT: increasing employment and productivity in the EU

WHAT YOU MUST REMEMBER

1. The European Commission published in February 2018 the review of employment and social development for the third quarter of 2017.
2. It shows that the EU economy has continued to "expand" at a higher rate than expected, particularly in terms of employment, with 236.3 million people working in the EU, the highest level never recorded.
3. This report gives a global picture of recent developments in these two areas. It reports on short-term changes in GDP and employment trends.

Compared with the same quarter of 2016, employment increased by 1.7% in both the EU and the Euro Zone, representing 4 million more people in the EU and 2.7 more in the Euro Zone . Wholly, 236.3 million people were employed throughout the EU and 156.3 million in the Euro Zone. **The services sectors continued to drive growth in the EU**, with employment increasing in all sectors except financial, where a slight decline was recorded, according to the report.

Permanent and full-time jobs were the main drivers of employment growth. The number of permanent contracts increased by 1.7% in the first three quarters of 2017. This represents an increase of 2.8 million employees, three times more than the increase in temporary contracts (approximately 900 000) over the same period. The number of full-time contracts remains below pre-crisis levels, however, the review states.

All in all, everything is positive, whether it is unemployment, labor productivity (growth of 0.8%), **the financial situation of households** (growth of 1.5%) or the demand for labor. (increase of 2%).

The financial situation of European households has continued to improve with a growth rate of around 1.5% year-on-year, mainly due to the rise in labor income. In almost all Member States, household incomes increased year-on-year in the first half of 2017. Nevertheless, in several countries, such as Croatia, Spain, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands and Portugal , the gross disposable **income of households is still below the level of 2008**.

The document is available [here](#)

7. FAMILIES: Eurofound rings the bell on family poverty in the EU

Eurofound, the European agency for the development of social policy and employment, published on February 6th a study on the situation of families in the EU, in which it highlights a serious impoverishment of single-parent families and big families since the 2008 financial crisis. The agency explains, for example, that in some Member States, 8 out of 10 single-parent families are at risk of poverty and social exclusion. The study notes that state aid is becoming more resource-intensive, creating new and disadvantaged groups.

A number of recommendations are proposed:

- Improve policy evaluation programs, taking into account beneficiaries and different stakeholders;
- Integrate family policies into a more comprehensive strategy at local, regional and national levels;

- Improve the balance between work and private life;
- Stimulate help with childcare;
- Better take into account non-traditional families (stepfamilies, single-parent families);
- Improve the dissemination of information among families on available help.
 - ⇒ Note the participation of **Chiara Crepaldi of the Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale - IRS of Milan**

The study is available in English only [here](#)

8. SOCIAL AFFAIRS: Commissioner Thyssen presents the outline of the future European Labor Authority (ELA)

WHAT YOU MUST REMEMBER

1. An annual budget of more than 50 million € and 140 agents by 2023. These financial and human resources are provided for the European Labor Authority (ELA) as presented by the European Commissioner for Social Affairs, Marianne Thyssen, on March 13th in Strasbourg.
2. This initiative is part of a series of measures in the social field.

In line with the European pillar of social rights, the ELA has three major objectives:

- Facilitate the information of individuals and employers about their rights and responsibilities;
- Support intra-state cooperation in the implementation of the European legislation, including joint inspection exercises
- Play a mediating role in cross-border disputes between the respective national authorities.

ELA will focus in particular on free movement and posted workers, as well as on the coordination of social security systems. This last point concerns all EU citizens and not just workers.

ELA's idea is based on other existing European agencies, in particular Europol and Eurojust, whose activities are severely limited by the principle of subsidiarity. ELA's area of activity will focus on:

- Workers 'and employers' access to information on their rights and responsibilities and cross-border situations;
- Cooperation and exchange of information between national authorities to improve the implementation and enforcement of EU law;
- Coordination and support of control and inspection activities at the request of the Member States to combat irregularities and fraud;
- The development of risk analyzes focused on the mobility of cross-border workers;
- Support Member States in defining areas for action (training and promotion of good practices);
- Mediation between national authorities in disputes involving European legislation;
- Cooperation between different actors in the event of disruptions in the labor market (eg restructuring of companies based in several different Member States).

ELA will be a permanent body that will receive advice from its Board of Directors where each Member State and the Commission will have a representative. Once the authority is fully operational, the European Advisory Group will provide assistance by staying close to the

ground. It will be chaired by the Commission and will consist of social partners at European level.

BUDGET. The Commission plans a budget which will progressively increase from 12 to 56.5 M € between 2019 and 2024. The agents will increase from 38 to 144 over the same period (69 European agents, 60 national experts and 15 contract agents). The European Commission also plans to evaluate ELA's mandate every five years, with the possibility of expanding its activities. The ELA will therefore not be the result of a merger of existing agencies (Cedefop, EU-OSHA, Eurofound or the ETF), as some MEPs had expressed fears during the presentation of the project by the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, in September 2017.

A fifth agency would be created but, according to the Commissioner, but this would not duplicate other agencies. ELA's task was to focus on situations of cross-border mobility. Regarding the timing of the project, the Commissioner expressed the hope that the adoption would be made as soon as possible so that the ELA could be operational by 2019.

One point remains to decide: its location.

THE ELA HAS RECEIVED A POSITIVE WELCOME OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY. Élisabeth Morin-Chartier, in the lead, for whom the ELA is a necessary step towards a social Europe that has the means to support its ambition and "should play the role of transmission belt to ensure compliance with European rules on the mobility of workers". The MEP also warned against any attempt to turn this authority into a simple platform for exchange between national experts. The S&D Group also welcomed the social equity package as a step towards a more social Europe and better protection of workers' rights.

For Luca Visentini, Secretary General of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), the ELA is needed to fight cross-border social fraud. According to him, this should concern the protection of workers and not just another tool of the internal market. UEAPME, representing SMEs, fully supported the Commission proposal.

9. SOCIAL PROTECTION: The European Commission launches a series of recommendations to improve its access

WHAT YOU MUST REMEMBER

3. The European Commission wants to extend social security coverage to all workers. In this regard, at the plenary session in Strasbourg on March 13th, the Commissioner presented a set of recommendations to the Council on access to social protection at the presentation of the "Social Equity Package".
4. The Commission's objective is to monitor the evolution of the labor market and the growing number of "atypical" contract workers (around 40% of the workforce according to Commission figures), of whom an increasing number with no social protection. The main objective is to enable all workers, employees and those who are not employed, to join appropriate social security systems.
5. The Commission therefore wants to help workers to collect rights in this area and facilitate their transfer of social security contributions from one job to another. Finally, the Commission wishes to improve the dissemination of information on the rights and responsibilities of workers in the field of social security.

- More specifically, the recommendations concern unemployment benefits, sickness benefits, maternity and paternity benefits, pensions and disability benefits, as well as those relating to work accidents and occupational diseases.
- The Commission has indicated that Member States must provide full and compulsory coverage for all workers irrespective of their contractual relations, especially for the self-employed. All benefits are included in this coverage, with the exception of unemployment benefits, which are left to Member States.
- In the section on implementation and follow-up of recommendations, the document states that Member States must provide "reliable" data on the status of the worker (employee or self-employed), the type of contract (temporary, permanent, part time) or full-time), sex, age and nationality of the worker. Member States have 18 months from the publication of recommendations for action.
- On this basis, the Commission is committed to establishing a benchmarking framework and developing indicators for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations over the next 12 months. Monitoring will also be done in tandem with the European Semester. The Commission also indicated that it would provide an assessment of implementation in three years. On the basis of this assessment, the Commission will have the right to intervene by submitting other proposals, which could include legislation.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER. In a separate document focused on monitoring the implementation of the European pillar of social rights, the Commission provided the main guidelines on the future social security number. A short paragraph focuses on this issue. It will be a digital identifier because the aim is to make the social security system interoperable, to facilitate the portability of rights and to allow identification "in real time". The Commission is expected to present this initiative in June.

The Commission presented its set of initiatives to the national ministers of employment and social affairs at the EPSCO Council meeting on March 15th.

10. LEARNING: agreement on the European framework for effective and quality learning

WHAT YOU MUST REMEMBER

1. In the EPSCO (Employment and Social Affairs) Council, Member States concluded an agreement on a European framework for effective and quality learning. Commissioner Thyssen welcomed this agreement

She believes that it will be useful to Member States that establish or improve their apprenticeship programs, as it will help policymakers to ensure that the potential of learning is fully exploited. The framework encourages Member States to base their learning programs on a **partnership strategy involving employers, trade unions and other stakeholders** (eg vocational education and training institutions as well as student and parent associations).). The framework also states that learning should be based on a written contract and that pedagogical support should be provided. Businesses, especially small businesses, should be supported. An apprentice should receive remuneration or compensation for the work provided, and be able to do part of his training in another country. The Commissioner considers this to be an important step for vocational education and training in Europe and looks forward to the engagement and cooperation of the social partners in assisting Member States in implementing the Agreement.

HISTORY OF THE FILE. In the context of the Skills Strategy for Europe, presented in June 2016, the Commission has adopted a proposal for a European framework for effective and quality learning that sets out essential criteria for learning.

The text approved today is based on a Commission proposal presented on October 5th 2017, itself based on important contributions from the European social partners, an opinion of the Tripartite Advisory Committee on Vocational Training and valuable contributions from members of the European Alliance for Learning.

The framework follows up on the communications on the new skills strategy for Europe and on investing in Europe's youth and also contributes to the European Pillar of Social Rights. At the third European Professional Skills Week, to be held in November 2018, the Commission will launch new learning support services that will facilitate the implementation of the framework.

Fact Sheet: Skills Strategy for Europe: Ensuring effective and quality learning is available [here](#)

11. EMA: from Strasbourg a conditional green light in favour of the Netherlands

MILAN'S HOPES HANG OVER AN APPEAL AND THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE EU COURT OF JUSTICE

With 507 in favour 112 against and 37 abstained, the European Parliament has approved a legislation authorizing the post-Brexit transfer of the **European Medicines Agency (EMA)** from London to Amsterdam, albeit with conditions attached. Furthermore the EP asked the Council and the Commission to be part of the decisional process for assigning the EU agencies, giving way to a trilogue, and urged the European Commission and the Dutch Authorities to deliver the building in Amsterdam in compliance with the established terms. This to ensure that the Drugs Agency may easily move into its temporary office within 1 January 2019 and into its new permanent headquarters, the Vivaldi Building, by 16 November 2019. Two resolutions have been adopted: one on expenditures and the other on revenues for the next multiannual financial framework in force as of 2021 which supplies the means to address future challenges. Even if the Italian Members of the European Parliament delegation was split on the vote, with 5 Star Movement (M5S) members voting in favour and the Italian Democratic Party (PD), Lega and Forza Italia MEPs voting against, the amendment 15, which bears the signature of Giovanni La Via, a European People's Party member, was approved by a large majority. The plenary "regrets that his (La Via's) role as co-legislator was not fully recognized and was not invited to participate to the new EMA headquarters selection procedure". La Via has later stated that the Strasbourg plenary "sent a strong message to the Council. The decision was taken in the wrong manner and in the future, an opportunity of this kind is unlikely to arise again".

For his part, the M5S MEP Piernicola Pedicini affirms that "a negative vote on the EP EMA report would have meant losing all hopes for Milan, because the Commission's proposal would have been cancelled, and the November decision adopted by 27 Member states in the margins of the European Council would have been left unchanged. "Even Patrizia Toia, head of the PD MEPs said that" If the rules are wrong, the results brought about by these rules must also be called into question ", announcing that she will continue making her case, especially with the trilogue. In this picture, hopes for Milan seem to be lost but the Lombardy president elected, Attilio Fontana believes the game is not quite over yet: "We must insist in bringing our case in every possible place, with proper Government backing, so that no stone will be left unturned ". Actually, the hopes of Milan are hanging on the appeal presented by the City and on which the EU Court of Justice will deliberate within the next months.

■ EUROPEAN FUNDING

12. EUROPEAN FUNDING: Commissioner Thyssen calls for financial instruments in the social field

WHAT YOU MUST REMEMBER

1. Commissioner Thyssen pronounced a speech at a conference on the role of financial instruments in the social field on March 8th, called for the anchoring of financial instruments in the European Social Fund.

She believes that these instruments should not replace the ESF but will become increasingly necessary at a time when public budgets are under pressure and lack of effectiveness. According to the Commissioner, Europe "should do more with less" after 2020. The European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) will become more important and social innovation should be strengthened, she argues. Mrs Thyssen also wants to support microfinance, following the success of the European Program for Change and Social Innovation (EaSI).

13. EUROPEAN FUNDING: MEPs want to increase cohesion policy and ESF budget after 2020

WHAT YOU MUST REMEMBER

1. In a report on the social dimension of the European Semester budget process, drafted by Krzysztof Hetman (EPP, Poland) and adopted on February 27th (24 votes in favor, 10 against, with 14 abstentions), the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs of the European Parliament (EMPL) calls for an increase in the budget for cohesion policy and the European Social Fund (ESF) after 2020.

Even though the Commission seems ready to introduce cuts in the area of Cohesion Policy, MEPs call for an increase in the Cohesion Policy envelope in the next MFF. In the same compromise amendment, they ask that the ESF budget be increased as well.

MEPs call for the European Semester to really integrate the principles of the European pillar on social rights and consider that to do this, social dialogue must be conducted at all levels to ensure bottom-up convergence. They call on the European Commission to propose "concrete" proposals (legislation, financial instruments) to support these "concrete" results. For example: improve the adoption of European Funds for Strategic Investments (EFSI).

MEPs also stress the importance of developing digital skills and improving worker mobility across the Union and between all sectors. Above all, MEPs call for qualifications to be recognized, as well as skills acquired informally, to improve employability, especially for young people.

The EMPL Committee also calls on the Commission to develop new forms of social dialogue adapted to the evolution of employment. Above all, it is important to emphasize that workers are protected when they become whistleblowers.

■ EUROPEAN AGENDA - MARCH TO JUNE 2018

MARCH	APRIL	MAY
<p>■ EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 12 to 15 - Plenary Session in Strasbourg 21 and 22, 27 and 28 - Committee EMPL meeting</p> <p>■ EUROPEAN COUNCIL 22 and 23 - European Council 15 - Council of Ministers in EPSCO¹</p> <p>■ CONFERENCE 1 - Presentation of the European survey on life quality in 2016 Organised by : CESE Information available here</p> <p>■ EFFE 12 - 2nd meeting of contributors to the White Paper 28 - General Assembly then Steering Committee</p> <p>TO GO FURTHER: 4 - legislative elections in Italy 18 - presidential elections in Russia</p>	<p>■ EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 16 to 19 - Plenary Session in Strasbourg 25 and 26 - Committee EMPL meeting</p> <p>■ EUROPEAN COUNCIL 17 and 18 and 23 - Council of Ministers in EPSCO</p>	<p>■ EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 2 and 3 - small Plenary Session in Brussels 16 and 17 - Committee EMPL meeting 28 to 31 - Plenary Session in Strasbourg</p> <p>■ EUROPEAN COUNCIL 17 - Informal European Summit in Sofia</p> <p>■ EFFE 17 - Informal meeting of the Working group at the European Parliament (afternoon)</p>
JUNE		
<p>■ EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 7, 18 and 19 and 28 - Committee EMPL meeting 11 to 14 - Plenary Session in Strasbourg</p> <p>■ EUROPEAN COUNCIL 21 and 22 - Council of Ministers in EPSCO 28 and 29 - European Council</p>		

¹ Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council on social policy

■ APPOINTMENTS

COMMISSION

- **Risto Artjoki** became the new chief of staff of Commission Vice President **Jyrki Katainen**. He worked until then for the Finnish Minister of Finance.
- The cyriot **Themis Christophidou** will be the new Director General of DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture. Until then Head of Cabinet of the Commissioner in charge of International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, she is the first Cypriot national appointed Director General. In office at the European Commission for more than 17 years, she has served as Deputy Chief of Staff to former Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth Androula Vassiliou.
- **Mariana Kotzeva** will be the next Director General of DG EUROSTAT. Bulgarian, she was Deputy Chief Executive Officer since July 2012. She is the first Bulgarian national to be appointed to a post of Director General. She also becomes the first woman to head the European Statistical Office EUROSTAT.
- The Dutch **Joost Korte** will be the new Director General of DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. He has been Deputy Director General of DG Trade since January 2017 and today has the mission to help implement the results of the Gothenburg Summit on Growth and Jobs, set up the Joint Labor Authority announced by President Juncker in his State of the Union address and preparing the European Social Fund for the next Multiannual Financial Framework.
- The French **Jean-Eric Paquet** will be the new Director General of DG Research and Innovation. Since November 2011 he has been one of the three Deputy Secretaries General of the Juncker Commission.
- The italian **Mauro Petriccione** will be the new Director General of DG Action for Climate. He has worked for the European Commission for more than thirty years and more particularly in the department in charge of Trade, he was recently negotiator of the EU-Canada and EU-Japan trade agreements.
- The current Directors General **Job Delbeke** (DG Climate Action), **Michel Servoz** (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) and **Robert-Jan Smits** (DG Research and Innovation) will become Senior **Advisers to EPSC** (European Center for Policy Strategy)) (the internal think tank of the Commission) directly advising the President and the College. Mr. Servoz will be Senior Advisor for Robotics, Artificial Intelligence and the Future of European Labor Law, Mr. Delbeke will be Senior Advisor Relations with the European University Institute of Florence and Mr. Smits will be Senior Advisor with a mandate to be determined later.
- **Jean-Luc Demarty**, Director General of the Trade DG and **Dominique Ristori**, Director General of the Energy DG, will remain in place. They have reached the age limit and must normally retire. But the Commission wants them to be able to finish the files in progress before they leave.
- Martin Selmayr's ex-right-hand man succeeds him at the head of the Commission President's office. Indeed, the Spanish **Clara Martinez Alberola**, until now Deputy Chief of Staff, will take the reins of the team of the President of the European Commission. She will be the first woman to hold this position. Clara Martinez Alberola will be assisted by

Richard Szostak, who was previously in charge of foreign affairs at the firm. Of Polish and British nationality, he is particularly involved on the Brexit issue.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

- **Udo Bullman** was elected to lead the group of Social Democrats. The German MEP won by 86 votes to 61, on the evening of March 20th, against his Belgian counterpart **Kathleen Van Brempt**. He replaces the Italian **Gianni Pittella**, who became a senator during the Italian legislative elections on March 4th. The S & D group is the 2nd political formation of the hemicycle with 189 deputies (out of 751).
- On March 15th, MEPs narrowly approved the choice of Spain's **Luis de Guindos** as the new vice-president of the European Central Bank. However, politicians believe that they are not sufficiently involved in the choice of people who hold high office in the EU. They ask states to discuss how to improve information exchange and selection processes.
- On March 15th, MEPs approved the list of 30 members of the new special commission on tax evasion. Among the French elected, **Anne Sander** (LR), **Emmanuel Maurel** (PS) and **Eva Joly** (EELV). The first meeting will be held on March 22nd.
- Socialist MEP Jean-Paul Denanot has announced his resignation, which will be effective on June 11th, when he will report on the European Strategy for the Promotion of Protein Crops. It allows **Karine Gloanec-Maurin**, next on the list, to become MEP for the year remaining until the European elections.
- The European Parliament has a new Vice President. **Zdzislaw Krasnodebski**, a Polish deputy from the ranks of the European Conservatives and Reformists, was elected vice-president of the hemicycle on March 1st. He replaces his compatriot **Ryszard Czarnecki**, dismissed from office in January for insulting another Polish MP.

NEWS IN BRIEF

- The European Criminal Police Office (Europol) officially has a new Executive Director. The Commissioner General of the Belgian Federal Police **Catherine De Bolle** was appointed head of Europol by the European Council in December. EU ministers endorsed the appointment at the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 8 March. She is the first woman to hold this position. The European Commission's recommendation on the removal of illegal content gives Europol a key role in the fight against online terrorist propaganda.
- **Hans Stein** becomes the new Representative of the North Rhine-Westphalia Region in Brussels. He replaces **Klaus Müller**.
- The European Investment Bank has a new Secretary General. **Marjut Santoni** was officially designated on February 20th. The Finn will take office on March 1st. After a career in banking, she joined the European Commission in 1996. She has been Deputy Secretary General of the EIB since 2015.

About EFFE

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Created in 2012, the European Federation for Family Employment (EFFE) chaired by Marie Béatrice Levaux is based on the principles of: free choice of lifestyle and support of citizens in their homes; respect for the private home; social and citizen responsibility.

The EFFE (www.effe-homecare.eu) promotes and defends home-based employment within the European institutions: it is committed to bringing a model of social innovation to the service of European citizens through the services and jobs of the family at home, relaying the EU 2020 strategy for a "sustainable social market economy". Social inclusion is the keyword and remain at the heart of the sector as a source of economic growth through the creation of mass jobs and the fight against undeclared work.

Marie Béatrice Levaux (FEPEM) - President; **Andrea Zini** (ASSINDATCOLF) - Vice President; **Karmele Acedo** (Grupo SSI) - Secretary General; **Anita Poutard** (IPERIA-The Institute) - Treasurer.

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