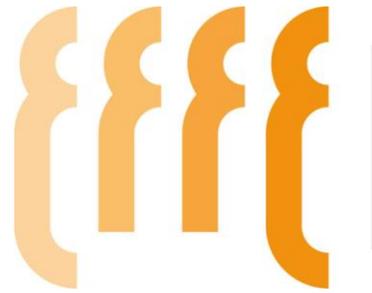


# FEDERATION EUROPEENNE DES EMPLOIS DE LA FAMILLE



EUROPEAN  
FEDERATION  
FOR FAMILY  
EMPLOYMENT  
& HOME CARE

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SEPTEMBER 2018

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## ■ EUROPEAN POLICY FRAMEWORK

### 1. EUROPEAN SUMMIT: Emmanuel Macron warned Eastern Countries

French President did not mince his words at the press conference after the informal meeting of European leaders in Salzburg on September 20<sup>th</sup>. Without citing them, Emmanuel Macron accused the countries of Eastern Europe of "generating" a "crisis and tensions". He referred to "those who say," I do not want to respect international law, "or those who say they are in Schengen and love Europe" when it comes to get structural funds, "adding that" not one refugee who is entitled to asylum will not be taken. "It is those who create the trouble," said the French president. For him "the migratory subject is a real challenge". "The answers must be deep, national and European" to "live up to our values". According to the head of state, the European elections of May 2019 will be the moment of a "discussion in truth", because "Europe is not a "menu à la carte", but "a political project. And the sanction will be clear. "Countries that do not want more solidarity will come out of Schengen, will no longer touch Structural funds," he said. Repeating a threat already on the table as part of the discussions on the EU budget after 2020.

### 2. EUROPEAN ELECTIONS: state of play at EU level

#### Nb: 270 TEXTS TO BE SETTLED BEFORE THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

This is the official count that was presented at the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament on September 6<sup>th</sup>. Exceptionally, the president of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, attended to this meeting. He said that the executive plan to present only a very limited number of new texts, on specific topics: migration, border protection, digital agenda, withdrawal of online content, money laundering. It should be noted that, depending on the results of the Brexit negotiation, other texts may be necessary. Parliament will be sitting for the last time in April 2019.

#### ■ WHAT FUTURE FOR "SPITZENKANDIDATEN"?

*In 2014, Parliament succeeded in imposing its candidate - Jean-Claude Juncker - as President of the European Commission. In 2019, the concept shows signs of erosion in all corners of Europe.*

#### THE CONCEPT:

In theory, it is simple. Every five years, each political family nominates its leading contender (or "Spitzenkandidat" in German) to become the next President of the European Commission. European voters therefore have the choice between conservatives, socialists, ecologists, liberals ... in the polls, and the party with the most elected deputies (or the second in the event of failure) will then try to form a majority in Parliament to get its leader approved.

When the mechanism was set up in 2014, the aim was to make the EU more democratic, to show citizens that their vote had a real impact on the choice of leaders. But, from all sides, this acquis is called into question for the elections of 2019. Indeed, because of the rise of the far right, some fear that none of the groups has more than 200 deputies in the next hemicycle. That would make the building of a majority difficult and potentially require four parties (currently the coalition brings together the EPP and the S & D group).

In these circumstances the question is already asked in Brussels: can a Spitzenkandidat impose itself or will it be abandoned after the vote because of the wars between parties in? Will there be a candidate from elsewhere? Heads of State and Government, for their part,

have a negative view of this concept, which deprives them of their decision-making power. Indeed, before 2014, they could freely choose the name of the President of the European Commission. The latter was then validated by the deputies.

Officially, leaders like German Chancellor Angela Merkel support the principle of Spitzenkandidaten. But, behind the scenes, the distribution of important positions in the EU is the subject of intense negotiations.

The candidacy of Michel Barnier, which has been mentioned many times, is undermined by the Brexit negotiating agenda, which the latter is piloting for the Commission.

In France, Emmanuel Macron does not belong to a European political family, so he has no interest in defending a process locked by the parties. He does not wish to refrain from appointing a Commission President from elsewhere.

#### ▪ STATE OF PLAY IN THE DIFFERENT EUROPEAN PARTIES

**EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (EPP):** the nomination process of the EPP candidate for the Presidency of the European Commission is launched. The first official contender is the German Manfred Weber who has been chairing the group at EP since 2014.

Former Finnish Prime Minister Alexander Stubb and Frenchman Michel Barnier (negotiator for Brexit) are still maturing their candidacy, which will have to be tabled before October 12. Tensions exist within the group due to the shift to the right of several national parties.

**EUROPEAN SOCIALIST PARTY (PES):** The Socialists and Democrats group (2nd formation of the hemicycle) is the emanation of the Party of European Socialists. The latter is in bad shape. Its national parties are almost all in decline or in the process of being marginalized. The situation of the French PS is the illustration. The Slovak Vice-President of the European Commission, Maros Sefcovic, has announced that he will be a candidate to be appointed Spitzenkandidat. The French Commissioner Pierre Moscovici must make known his decision to present himself or not in the coming days.

**ALLIANCE OF EUROPEAN DEMOCRATS AND LIBERALS (ALDE):** this party is one of the components of the group that bears the same name in the hemicycle. The 2nd pillar of the group is the European Democratic Party (PDE), in which we find the French Modem. The leader of the ALDE group, Guy Verhofstadt, wants an alliance with *La République en marche* for the upcoming elections. In an interview with the French newspaper *Ouest-France*, he rallied to the position of Emmanuel Macron, believing that the Spitzenkandidaten process does not meet all the democratic criteria. The Belgian doubts the appointment of a contender.

The party would normally meet in Madrid between November 8 and 10 to designate it. Without ALDE, the pro-European political family heir to the group created by Simone Weil, the Spitzenkandidaten lose their legitimacy and will weigh little against the heads of state and government.

**THE GREENS:** the European Green Party includes the vast majority of the elected representatives of the group (if we exclude its regionalist component). They have four contenders for the presidency of the Commission. Petra de Sutter, Belgian environmentalist Senator Bas Eickhout, Dutch MEP Ska Keller and Atanas Schmidt of the Bulgarian Green Party have applied for Spitzenkandidaten. Traditionally, the Green Party has a "ticket" made up of a man and a woman. The four contenders will be decided at the congress to be held in Berlin on 23, 24 and 25<sup>th</sup> November.

**PARTY OF THE EUROPEAN LEFT (PEL):** Initially, the PEL is the backbone of the United European Left (GUE). A changing situation because of deep differences or political enmities. The Greeks of Syriza and the French of LFI (La France Insoumise) have been at open war since 2015. Jean-Luc Mélenchon has always considered the rallying of the Greek Prime Minister, Alexis Tsipras, in the third plan of European financial aid as treason.

Both members of the GUE, LFI and Podemos have created an alliance outside the PEL, of which they are not members (or no more, in the case of the French). They were joined by the Portuguese Bloco and do not exclude to present a Spitzenkandidat alone.

If, as in 2014, the PEL also presents a candidate for the European Commission, the GUE would start in a disorganized election. These divisions are explained by a struggle of influence within the group, now largely dominated by the Germans Die Linke, whose line is considered too centrist by LFI and Podemos. By allying, they seek to reverse the internal balance of the group.

**ALLIANCE OF CONSERVATIVES AND EUROPEAN REFORMISTS:** this party brings together the members of the European Conservatives and Reformists (eurosceptics, 73 deputies) even with the forthcoming departure of their British elected officials (20 out of 73), the group has chances of survival after 2019. Its political formation The European Conservatives and Reformists Alliance is planning to announce the name of its contender to the European Commission on October 18th.

#### **TWO SPECIAL CASES:**

**Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD):** this group does not have a European political party. No Spitzenkandidat is expected at the moment.

**Europe of Nations and Liberties (ENL):** ENL is composed of national parties opposed to any political integration, such as the *Rassemblement National* (France, former FN) or the Dutch Freedom Party. They do not intend to present Spitzenkandidat.

#### ▪ **LACK OF CLARITY IN FRANCE**

#### **LRM AND EUROPE, WAIT TO KNOW MORE**

Christophe Castaner, head of the French presidential party, continues his *tour of Europe*, meeting potential partners in the different European capitals. He refuses to reveal their names for the moment, but claims to discuss with a broad spectrum of political actors, center right as center left. He said he was "surprised" by Guy Verhofstadt's enthusiasm when he said he wanted to join Emmanuel Macron and create a movement with him. He repeated that he was not in favor of the logic of the Spitzenkandidaten and that LRM would present "when the time comes", a team of European level. Castaner has also reached out to the center-right formations in France: "Faced with the challenge - which is to save Europe - it is necessary that all those who believe in Europe join ourselves."

On September 26, LRM appeared alongside six European political leaders in a column published in several newspapers - Signed by Christophe Castaner (LRM), the Belgian Guy Verhofstadt (ALDE), the Italian Matteo Renzi (PD), the Spanish Albert Rivera (Ciudadanos), the Maltese Prime Minister, Joseph Muscat (Labor Party), the Dutchman Alexander Pechtold (Democrats 66) and the Romanian Dacian Ciolos (Romania together), the text, entitled "Wake up Europe", was published in Liberation, the Guardian and the Stampa. This text aims for the moment to show the common values shared by these politicians in Europe. Will the movements represented by these personalities be included in a common formation in the European Parliament? What are the next steps planned with them? For the moment, no answers.

## THE PARTY BREAK FOR EUROPEAN LISTS

Apart from LFI, which has appointed a duo, Manuel Bompard and Charlotte Girard, the other parties have still not chosen their top names for the European elections in May 2019, explains Le Monde. The PS, who tries at all costs to avoid appointing Pierre Moscovici, has just been denied by the Belgian Paul Magnette. The situation also remains tense on the left, with a new end of receivability sent by the ecologist Yannick Jadot to Benoît Hamon. The latter continues to hope for a union list, which could be done with the Communists, their leader, Ian Brossat, being very open to this option.

### **3. SWEDEN: On September 25, the center-right and far right coalition united their voices to dismiss Prime Minister Stefan Löfven weakened by the last legislative elections.**

Even if the rise of the extreme right was less strong than expected, the elections of September 9 led to a blocking situation. The block on the left is only one seat higher than the one on the right (144 against 143). In place since 2014, the hypothesis of a left-wing minority government, which thanks to the abstention of the right on the budget, may not be renewed. Two solutions then exist: a great coalition between the social democrats and the moderate right or a right-far right alliance. Two configurations that Swedish do not seem ready for the moment. In 2014, only three weeks were needed to form a government.

Fifteen days after the parliamentary elections, the Swedish still have not the slightest idea of who their next prime Minister is, nor the composition of the government. Since Monday, September 24, their Parliament has at least one new President: the conservative Andreas Norlen, 45, beat his social democrat opponent Asa Lindestam. Mr Norlen, former President of the Constitutional Law Commission of the Riksdag, was elected by the votes of the elected representatives of the Swedish Democrats (SD, far right).

His appointment was scarcely endorsed, and on September 25, he held a vote of no confidence in the outgoing Prime Minister, Social Democrat Stefan Löfven. A majority of 204 parliamentarians out of 349 voted against the motion of confidence, that is, all the elected representatives of the right, center and extreme right, less one vote. Mr Löfven will remain in his post to dispatch current affairs, pending the formation of a new government.

The Speaker of Parliament should appoint Conservative boss Ulf Kristersson to take up this task and begin coalition negotiations. They should be very complicated.

After four unsuccessful attempts to form a government, the President will have to call early elections.

### **4. BREXIT: Member States united against Theresa May**

Europeans put unprecedented pressure on Theresa May. France considers the current British proposals "unacceptable". For Germany, there is "no compromise possible on the integrity of the single market". For Spain, "the fundamental principles of the EU are indivisible". The 27 were direct after their discussion on the state of progress of the negotiations with the UK, on September 20 in Salzburg (Austria). The President of the European Council has also warned: an extraordinary summit to finalize the discussions will be organized on 17 and 18 November only if "significant progress" is made one month before, on 18 and 19 October in Brussels.

Donald Tusk also wanted the text describing the future trade relationship between the EU and the UK to set a clear course. Even if the details are negotiated during the transition period (March 2019-December 2020). A statement that goes in the direction of French requests. Paris wants to avoid any ambiguity that may suggest that the British would have obtained some benefits related to the single market, but not be part of it.

## OTHER MAJOR ISSUE: IRELAND

"There will be no agreement on the British withdrawal from the EU, if there is no safety net for the Northern Ireland border," the President of the European Council said on September 20. Donald Tusk showered the idea that the Irish problem could have been put under the carpet, to avoid a Brexit without agreement. The British Prime Minister pledged, on September 20, to quickly submit new proposals to avoid the return of a hard border on the island. However, Theresa May recalled that she would oppose the creation of a customs border between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom.

Only shadow to the European unity, the Hungarian Prime Minister, who accuses the Twenty-Seven of wanting to punish the British for the Brexit. Next step is the British Conservative Congress, from September 30 to October 2, crucial for the political survival of Prime Minister Theresa May, facing her tough pro-Brexit opponents.

### 5. ROMANIA: After Hungary, the European Parliament plans to look into the Romanian case

The President of the Hemicycle will invite the Prime Minister of Romania to speak in plenary at the end of October. For several months, the government in place has multiplied laws to weaken the judiciary and the fight against corruption. MEPs are worried about these drifts. The vote on a resolution in plenary in early October was discussed at the Presidents' Conference on September 13, but no decision has yet been taken. On September 12, MEPs approved a text calling for the opening of a sanctions procedure against Hungary for non-respect of the rule of law.

### 6. ITALY: Italian Interior Minister wants to "change the EU from the inside"

In an interview with Time Magazine, published on September 13, Matteo Salvini changes his tone about Europe. 'No, no' he does not want to 'blow up the EU', nor does Italy want to, but, 'on the contrary', 'change things from within'. "This Union has grown too fast, too fast, with no common base, only a common currency. So we are working to restore the European spirit that has been betrayed by those who govern us," he says. On immigration, his speech now has accents reminiscent of a part of the Germans Die Linke or French LFI. "Italy's biggest problem is work. Uncontrolled immigration creates damage in the labor market, as Italians cannot compete with exploited illegal workers. When he talks about his allies in Europe, with whom he works at the rally in the run-up to the European elections in May 2019, Matteo Salvini lists movements in France, Germany, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Belgium and Austria. Not a word about Hungary.

**IN BRUSSELS, YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE FUTURE ITALIAN BUDGET.** According to the European Commissioner for Economic Affairs, Pierre Moscovici, Italy is a problem within the Euro Zone. "This is the topic I want to focus on above all," he added. The far-right (League) and populist (5-star Movement) hybrid government is expected to send its budget proposal for 2019 by October 15, like all countries in the Euro Zone. Negotiations may be difficult. Politically, the government has little ally within the European Commission. And it seems that Matteo Salvini has little respect for the European budget rules.

## 7. HUNGARY: The Orban case continues to create divisions in Europe

### ▪ RIGHT AND EXTREME RIGHT BULGARES SUPPORT FULLY VIKTOR ORBAN

GERB (center right) and United Patriots (far right) rule together in Sofia. In a joint letter, the members of the government show their full support to Hungary and announce that Bulgaria will vote against possible sanctions against it. The Bulgarians believe that the countries of the East must stick together.

### ▪ A HISTORICAL VOTE IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

On September 12, MEPs gathered in plenary session to vote on the report made by Dutch environmentalist MEP Judith Sargentini on the state of the rule of law in Hungary. The day before Victor Orban had expressed in front of the Chamber to convince them to reject the report.

By a large majority - more than two-thirds of the votes cast - MEPs recommended to the Council (the Member States) the activation of an exceptional Community procedure (Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union) for clear risk of serious violation of the rule of law ".

This is the first time that the Brussels hemicycle, representing the 510 million citizens of the European Union (EU), also means clearly to a government of a Member State that it has crossed the red line, that it away from founding values.

The European Parliament has taken a particularly stigmatizing procedure: Article 7 has so far been triggered only once since it exists: by the Commission, against Poland, in December 2017. Conducted at its term, it can go so far as to deprive a State of its right to vote in the Council, which amounts to a virtual exclusion from the European game.

The EPP (Orban's party is part of it) has chosen not to give voting instructions, leaving its members to vote in their soul and conscience. The French party "Republicans" has been divided since then between MEPs for, against and those who abstained. Many believe that the EPP Congress in Helsinki on 7 and 8 November, to which Orban is invited, will be a test.

In fact, the debate on respect for the rule of law in Hungary crystallizes the opposition between populists and humanists. Supposed to respond to critics, Orban, positioning itself as leader of a vision of Europe. "We will not give in to blackmail, Hungary will defend its borders. We are ready for next May's elections and bring democracy back into European politics.

To defend him, Viktor Orbán found with him the representatives of the ultra-conservative Polish PiS, the anti-European leader of the Brexit Nigel Farage or the far-right elected RN Nicolas Bay. In contrast, the leaders of the Liberals, Greens, Socialists and the far left blasted the attitude of the Prime Minister.

## ■ SOCIAL EUROPE

### 8. DIRECTIVE ON WORKING CONDITIONS: MEPs deeply divided on the notion of "worker"

At the end of August, MEPs from the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL) debated on the definition of the term "worker" in the framework of the directive on transparent and predictable working conditions in the European Union.

Rapporteur Enrique Calvet Chambon (ALDE, Spain) suggested that rather than seeking a definition of the term "worker" at European level, with the risk of creating legal insecurities with national laws and the definitions of the EU Justic Court, he suggested to focus on the characteristics of contractual relationships.

He therefore proposed that everyone be considered a worker if they are in a functional and economically dependent organizational and hierarchical situation, so that as many people

as possible are covered by the Directive. The MEP said that we should avoid excluding workers from the scope of the directive, thereby avoiding "legal dumping". The MEP wants to avoid getting bogged down in a legal-national debate that could ruin the negotiations. The vote of the committee is scheduled for October 18, together with the vote on the European Labor Authority.

#### **9. DOMESTIC WORK IN ITALY: in 2019, hiring domestic workers under 35 will be cheaper in Italy**

News in the tax breaks scene in Italy: starting 2019, families hiring domestic workers aged less than 35 will be entitled to a rebate on contributions, with a possibility of saving up to € 1,050.00 over a maximum of 3 years. The measure applies to firms as well.

The rule laid out in Law no. 96 of 9 August 2018 (converting the so-called Dignity Decree) extends a provision which in fact already existed in the Italian legal system (Law 205/2017) applying it, as well, to the previously excluded sector of domestic work.

A victory for families who resort to the help of domestic workers, care givers and baby sitters but also for Assindatcolf, the association who, in order to obtain this important result, represented the interests of both families and workers before the Government during a meeting with the Minister of Labour, Luigi Di Maio.

Going into the specifics of the measure, which will be valid for the two-year period 2019-2020, there is a 50% discount on contributions paid for recruiting young people under 35. As a whole, the General Accounting Office has estimated that the measure could result into 31,200 new jobs a year. In terms of the domestic sector, Assindatcolf has calculated that there are currently about 2,500 young workers that are regularly employed on a permanent contract. This number could grow significantly with the deduction opportunities offered to families. In mid-October, the interministerial decree is expected to clarify some technical aspects starting from the array of future beneficiaries.

The second important introduction under Law 96, which once again has seen Assindatcolf as a protagonist, is the one exempting the sector from the burden of increases applied to fixed-term contract renewals. The provision was laid out in the text of the Decree approved by the Italian Executive. After finding the anomaly, Assindatcolf first reported it to the Finance and Labor Commissions of the Chamber of Deputies and successively brought it to the attention of the Government, creating a wide debate also covered by national media. The National Association of Home Employers calculated that, in addition to being useless, the measure could have burdened families with an increase in costs estimated at around 160 Euros per year (based on a standard 24-hours weekly contract). The Government has therefore opted for a turnaround, giving the green light in Commission to an amendment designed by the Pd (Democratic Party) that in fact, excluded the category.

#### **10. CHILDHOOD: EU examines idea of "child guarantee"**

The idea of a European guarantee for children has been repeatedly evoked by the European Parliament and seems to be progressing in Brussels.

In response to a parliamentary question by Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S & D, Lithuania), the European Commission said on August 24 that it was currently working to "implement the first phase of the European Parliament's preparatory action for children".

According to the MEP, a call for tenders was issued on March 21 to conduct a comprehensive and detailed feasibility study on child protection for four groups of vulnerable children, which is of particular concern and urgency.

The contract is expected to be signed in the coming weeks and the selected contractor will start working after the summer. A final report must be submitted 18 months later.

The second phase of the preparatory action, which is still to be the subject of a call for tenders, will examine the feasibility and added value of a child guarantee extended to more groups of children.

In a non-legislative resolution in 2016 on Work life balance, the European Parliament called for a guarantee on the model of the "Youth Guarantee " that would allow every child to have free access to health care, free scholarship and decent accommodation and proper nutrition.

There are currently 20 million children living below the poverty line in the European Union and more than one in four children live in extreme poverty.

## 11. WORK LIFE BALANCE : inter-institutional negotiations calendar

### WHAT YOU MUST REMEMBER

1. The "work-life balance" directive proposes that each parent, at the birth of a child, be entitled to four months of paid leave up to the level of sickness benefits. France strongly opposes it.
2. COREPER on 13 June, bringing together the permanent representatives of the EU, left two political points unresolved:
  - Transferability between the father and mother of parental leave
  - Compensation arrangements and vacation periods
3. At the EPSCO on Thursday, 21 June, EU Member States agreed on non-transferable paid parental leave with pay set at an "adequate" level of a month and a half. Unsurprisingly, the Directive has been considerably watered down by the Member States.
4. On July 11 MEPs from the EMPL Committee voted on David Casa's report with a level of paid paternity leave at 80% of gross salary and 78% for parental and care leave.

The Council and the European Parliament met for the first time on September 12 on the highly controversial Directive on work-life balance in order to exchange their respective positions and to agree on an initial timetable for inter-institutional negotiations.

Seeking a quick conclusion on the subject, the pace set by both institutions is strong. The next meeting is scheduled for October 8, followed by a third on November 8 and a fourth on November 19. The timetable is ambitious, especially since negotiations are likely to be particularly difficult, admits Parliament's rapporteur, David Casa (EPP, Malta), who expects clashes with the Council, given the distance between the positions.

The two institutions will compete at the level of paid leave (paternity, parental leave), the Council opting for greater flexibility, claiming only adequate remuneration of 80% of gross salary.

MEPs agreed on a non-transferable period of four months, compared to two months for the Council, of which a month and a half is paid. The child's upper limit for parents to apply for flexible working conditions has been set at 10 years. In this case too, the Council preferred to delete any reference to an exact age. In addition, MEPs want to expand the range of those who can request caregiver leave from those caring for family members to the second degree of kinship or affinity.

## **12. ELA: some Central and Eastern European countries are positioning themselves to welcome the future headquarters**

Slovakia, Cyprus and Romania are among the names of the most frequently mentioned Member States. Latvia was also mentioned, as was Estonia, but they were not confirmed. Romania is apparently the Member State most likely to welcome the new authority.

It is true that Slovakia, Romania and Cyprus do not have an EU agency on their territory. Latvia, for its part, has the Office of the European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC). Estonia hosts the European Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale Information Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (eu-LISA).

The seat selection process has not started yet. Time is of the essence, however, as the European Labor Authority is expected to begin its work in embryonic form in 2019. Its temporary seat is apparently set in Brussels pending the announcement of the location of its final seat.

As a reminder, the negotiations in Parliament have begun and the timetable is tight: a vote in the EMPL committee is scheduled for October 18.

The EESC calls for the role of the social partners in the European Labor Authority to be strengthened. In an opinion on the future ELA adopted on September 20, the members of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) made a series of recommendations to improve the role of the social partners in the future entity. For example, he proposes that the stakeholder group become an advisory board in which the role of the social partners is strengthened.

## **13. EMPLOYMENT: Eurostat says employment rate is lower in cities than in rural areas**

According to a report by the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat) published on September 19, employment rates in cities and suburbs (around 72%) are generally lower than in rural areas (73%) . This was particularly true in Belgium, with an employment rate of 62% in cities and 72% in rural areas. The same observations were made for Austria, where the unemployment rate is 70% for cities and 79% for rural areas. The opposite is true for the Eastern European Member States where employment rates are higher in cities than in rural areas, the most notable case being in Lithuania where the employment rate is 82% in cities but 68% in rural areas.

The report is available in its entirety [here](#)

## **14. GROWTH: Commission says EU economy is growing but at slower pace than in 2017**

In the first half of 2018, the EU economy continued to expand, but "slightly" slower than in 2017, the European Commission said in its quarterly report on employment and social developments in Europe ( ESDE) published on September 24th. "Since the beginning of 2018, the pace of economic growth has moderated and the most recent indicators of the survey indicate (...) greater uncertainty," says the report. The quarterly GDP growth rate in the first quarter and the second quarter of 2018 was 0.4% across the EU and the Euro Area. The lowest growth occurred in Italy (0.2%) and the highest in Luxembourg (2%). Ireland saw its economy contract by 0.6%. Employment rates also slowed to 0.4% in the second quarter of 2018 (down from 1.7% in the second quarter of 2017).

The report is available [here](#)

## ■ EUROPEAN FUNDING

### 15. ESF +: MEP Lope Fontagné seeks to adjust ESF allocations after 2020 and strengthen the fight against extreme poverty

#### WHAT YOU MUST REMEMBER

1. The European Social Fund should be transformed into ESF + for the next 2021-2027 programming, according to the Commission's proposal presented on 29 May.
2. Resulting from the merger of several funds, the ESF + should receive € 101.2 billion over the period, with a more direct link to the "European semester" (the Commission's annual reform recommendations).
3. The debate is launched in the European Parliament, an own-initiative report will be voted in October

According to the draft report, the rapporteur on the European Post-2020 European Social Fund Plus (ESF +), Veronica Lope Fontagné (EPP, Spain), supports the main orientations of the draft regulation on the table, while modifying certain levels of priority thematic allocations.

She proposes to increase the budget allocation for shared management of the ESF + to help young people (aged 15-29) from 10 to 15%. Where the Commission calls on the Member States to allocate at least 25% of their national resources from the ESF + to the promotion of social inclusion, Mrs Fontagné explains that this 25% rate should focus on the fight against poverty and promoting social inclusion.

She also wants to strengthen the territorial dimension of regions facing "serious and permanent" demographic problems. It also proposes to include specialized NGOs and organizations representing people living in poverty and social exclusion in partnerships specifically involving this phenomenon. The MEP also amends the article on the specific objectives of the fund in order to combat discrimination and promote equal opportunities.

She does not call into question the validity of the Commission's proposal to strengthen the link between the fund and the "European Semester".

It's a tight schedule. The MEP presented her draft on August 29. Amendments must be submitted no later than September 25. The vote is scheduled for the end of November for adoption at the mini-plenary of the European Parliament in late November.

## ■ EUROPEAN AGENDA - SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2018

SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER
<p>■ <b>EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT</b>  <b>6, 18 and 24</b> - Committee EMPL meeting  <b>10 to 13</b> - Plenary Session in Strasbourg</p> <p>■ <b>EUROPEAN COUNCIL</b>  <b>10</b> - Council of Ministers in EPSCO  <b>9</b> - legislatives elections in Sweden  <b>20</b> - European Summit in Salzburg (Austria)</p> <p>■ <b>EUROPEAN COMMISSION</b>  <b>24 to 26</b> - Active and healthy aging <a href="#">forum</a> in Bilbao</p> <p>■ <b>EFFE</b>  <b>6</b> - Meeting of the informal working group at the European Parliament  <b>24 and 25</b> - Policy visits for the PRODOME project (Paris)</p>	<p>■ <b>EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT</b>  <b>1st to 4 and 22 to 25</b> - Plenary Session in Strasbourg  <b>8, 9 and 18</b> - Committee EMPL meeting</p> <p>■ <b>EUROPEAN COUNCIL</b>  <b>18 and 19</b> - European Council  <b>11 and 12</b> - Council of Ministers in EPSCO  <b>7</b> - legislatives elections in Latvia  <b>14 - 15</b> - legislatives elections in Luxemburg and regional elections in Bavaria</p>	<p>■ <b>EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT</b>  <b>12 to 15 and 28 and 29</b> - Plenary Session in Strasbourg  <b>5 - 19 and 20 - 26 and 27</b> - Committee EMPL meeting  Vote in the Employment Committee on the proposal for a regulation on the ESF Social Fund +</p> <p><b>8 and 9</b> - Congress of the European People's Party (EPP) in Helsinki  Nomination of the Conservative candidate for the Presidency of the European Commission.</p> <p><b>8 and 9</b> - Congress of the European Liberal Party in Madrid  Nomination of the ALDE candidate for the Presidency of the European Commission.</p> <p><b>23-25</b> - Congress of the European Green Party in Berlin  Designation of the ecologist candidate for the Presidency of the European Commission.</p> <p>■ <b>EFFE</b>  <b>22 - 23</b> - Policy visits for the PRODOME project (Madrid)  <b>28</b> - Orientation Council in Paris</p>
DECEMBER	<p>■ <b>EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT</b>  <b>10 to 13</b> - Plenary Session in Strasbourg  <b>3</b> - Committee EMPL meeting</p> <p>■ <b>EUROPEAN COUNCIL</b>  <b>6 and 7</b> - Council of Ministers in EPSCO  <b>13-14</b> - European Council  <b>7 - 8</b> - Congress of the Party of European Socialists  Designation of the Socialist</p>	

## ■ APPOINTMENTS

### COMMISSION

- The French **Anne Bucher** will take up her post on October 1<sup>st</sup> at the head of the Commission's Directorate-General for Health. Until now, she led the Commission's Regulatory Committee. She will replace another Frenchman, **Xavier Prats Monne**. In office since 2015, he retires at the end of September.
- **Petru Dumitru** is now part of the Social Affairs and Inclusion Department of DG EMPL of the Commission.

### MEMBER STATES

- **Germany** - Changes to Germany's Permanent Representation to the EU - **Michael Clauss** becomes the MS's new permanent representative to the EU, replacing **Reinhard Silberberg**. The diplomat is assisted by **Susanne Szech-Koundouros**, appointed Deputy Permanent Representative in place of **Peter Rösger**. Germany's ambassador to China from 2013 to 2018, Michael Clauss has a long European experience. Passed through Brussels in 1997 where he was advisor to the Permanent Representation of Germany, he led the discussions within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the European Convention. Former Director General for European Affairs at the Ministry (2010-2013), he was also Commissioner in charge of the German Presidency of the EU in 2005.
- **France- Garance Pineau** will take care of the European elections for La République en Marche - The Diplomatic Advisor of the Minister of Labor will take care, alongside Christophe Castaner, to coordinate the European campaign and the constitution of the lists.
- **Malta** - Appointment of the new Permanent Representative to the EU: **Daniel Azzopardi**, replacing Marlene Bonnici.

### EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

- **Marietje Schaake** (ALDE), influential Dutch MEP, will not run again in 2019 - Dutch MEP, very active on copyright and international trade, has lost internal elections for the top of her party's list, D66. She announced that she would not seek a new term. Her colleague and rival **Sophie in't Veld**, very involved in data protection issues, will lead the D66 list in the Netherlands in the next European elections.
- Salvatore Domenico left his seat as deputy to be Mayor of Catania in Sicily

### ECOSYSTEM

- The arrival of **Steve Bannon** divides the European far right - Donald Trump's former advisor announced during the summer the opening of his new foundation in Brussels, The Movement. Its goal is to unite the anti-EU movements across the continent in the run-up to the May 2019 elections. But many parties do not look favorably on this newcomer. For the Scandinavians, it is too sulphurous. For the Germans, the interests defended by European formations diverge too much. Only the RN (ex-FN) seems seduced.

## About EFFE

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](http://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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