

**Association Européenne  
des Institutions Paritaires**

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**European Association  
of Paritarian Institutions**

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**AEIP Contribution  
to the  
Consultation on the future “EU 2020” Strategy**

AEIP stands for the European Association of Paritarian Institutions of Social Protection and is a lobbying group at European level. AEIP is currently teaming 38 institutions of social protection from 19 European countries, which are active in the area of coordinated pension schemes, pension funds, health and provident benefits, health and safety at work, unemployment benefits and holiday pay schemes. The values supported by AEIP are based on a balanced representation of employers and employees and include joint management, solidarity and transparency, as well as social policy emanating from collective bargaining. This approach is complementary to that applied within the social economy.

AEIP's members are particularly concerned with the second key priority set by the proposed “EU 2020” strategy. They consider the evaluation of the existing social protection systems essential for enabling Europe to face the upcoming challenges of an ageing society. In addition, AEIP agrees on the need to raise employment rates, considering men and women, as well as the younger and the older generation. Only the combination of the modernisation of social schemes with an enforced labour market will lead to an inclusive Europe, where an adequate and sustainable income and respectively pension assures the social good of a decent life standard.

Referring to this approach, AEIP is now exposing some features, which shall become fixed elements of the “EU 2020” strategy. They will enforce the strategy's social dimension, as it has also been asked for by the EU Parliament during Mr Barroso's hearing on December 16, 2009.

As far as the demographic developments within the European Union are concerned, AEIP is stressing the need for initiatives to promote higher birth rates. The encouragement of couples to have children goes along with the need to facilitate the combination of work and family life. The promotion of childbearing may be considered as one key tool. Here, initiatives shall not only be taken by national and regional governments, but also by the EU: At European level, best national or regional practices shall be communicated and actively supported. Moreover, the EU shall continue setting common goals. In 2002, during the Barcelona summit, the following targets were adopted: Member states should remove distinctive to female labour force participation and strive to provide childcare by 2010 to at least 33% of children under three years of age and at least 90% of children between three years old and the

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mandatory school age.<sup>1</sup> It makes sense to follow-up on and to develop this demand on a long-term perspective.

The provision of childcare is just one initiative to better integrate women, especially mothers, into the labour market. In addition, the EU shall give a stable judicial background to support working parents. Firstly, all the EU anti-discrimination legislations will need to be further implemented not only formally, but also substantially. Furthermore, the model of 'Flexicurity' shall be promoted, not only implying the management of a smooth transition between job and training, but also between job, training and parenthood. As agreements between employers and employees have to be found, the negotiations of conditions of 'Flexicurity' shall be based on the hearing of both social partners. The recently adopted parental leave directive is a good example of an agreement which was obtained within the framework of the European Social Dialogue. Also regarding its content, it is a good step to be followed up on.

In order to ensure an appropriate social protection level and financial sustainability of social and welfare systems, AEIP is recommending treating the question of the adequacy of pensions also at European level. Within the enlargement of the EU, it has become more striking to ensure that national pension levels do not differ too significantly. While of course the principle of subsidiarity shall be still respected, the adequacy issue may be addressed in the upcoming green paper on pensions by the Commission of Employment and Social Affairs.

As mentioned above, AEIP is composed of institutions jointly managed by employers' and employees' representatives. Due to this expertise in cooperation between both social partners, AEIP is underlining the importance of using the social dialogue at European level as an instrument by the EU Commission. Social partners are to be considered important players who shall be included into the decision-making process. Within certain industries, such as the construction or metal one, a great mobility of workers has been registered. In these cases, portability issues have to be solved and the need to come to social agreements at pan-European level is most evident. The launch of the new sectoral social dialogue committee on Metal in January 2010 is a welcome step into the direction of transparent negotiations taking several perspectives into account.

To insure an inclusive society within the framework of an increasing mobility of workers, European social partners shall be enabled and encouraged to come to cross-border agreements creating social funds at European level. The construction sector is a good example of where steps into this direction have been taken and shall be followed and developed.

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<sup>1</sup> Eurostat News Release 172/2008 - 5 December 2008;  
[http://www.eds-destatis.de/en/press/download/08\\_12/172-2008-12-05.pdf](http://www.eds-destatis.de/en/press/download/08_12/172-2008-12-05.pdf).

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AEIP will be pleased to provide expertise during further developments and to contribute to further consultations.

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