



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 18 February 2010

6576/10

**SOC 125
ECOFIN 109**

NOTE

from:	The Employment Committee
to:	Permanent Representatives Committee (Part I) / Council (EPSCO)
Subject:	Preparation of the European Council of 25-26 March 2010 (European Strategy for growth and jobs) - Contribution by EMCO to the EPSCO Council of 8 March 2010 regarding the "EU 2020" Strategy.

Delegations will find attached a contribution by the Employment Committee with a view to the session of the Council (EPSCO) on 8 March 2010.



The Employment Committee

EU 2020 – follow up to the extraordinary February Council

Role of the employment strategy and EPSCO Council in the future strategy for growth and jobs

EMCO CONTRIBUTION

Having taken note of the discussions of the extraordinary European Council on 11th of February, the Employment Committee confirms its views on the future strategy as reflected in the opinion endorsed by the EPSCO November 2009¹ and in its contribution to the Commission consultation².

Focus of the future strategy

- The Lisbon Treaty stipulates that the Union should aim at full employment and social progress, as reflected in the horizontal social clause. This gives reasons for strengthening the employment and social dimensions in the new EU strategy.
- The Employment Committee reiterates that the EES should remain one of the key strands of the future EU strategy, within a limited number of objectives and in line with Articles 121 and 148 of the Treaty. The experience gained under the crisis confirms that employment and economic policies should be mutually reinforcing.

¹ Doc. 15529/09.

² EMCO response to the Commission consultation on the future EU 2020 strategy (attached).

- The Employment Committee has been underlining that the weakness of the current Lisbon Strategy was rather in the integration, coordination and implementation of policies, than in the formulation of priorities. Therefore the new strategy should reinforce the balance and coherence between economic, social and environmental policies. Moreover, the external dimension of the strategy should be reinforced.

Governance structure

- The key role of the EPSCO Council in the governance process of the future strategy should be strengthened, both regarding the topics it is responsible for and the integration of the employment pillar with other pillars of the Strategy. Within its core area of expertise EPSCO should ensure that issues concerning the employment and social dimension of EU are effectively conveyed to the European Council.
- The crisis underlines the importance of coordinating different policies and measures put in place in Member States. The Open Method of Coordination has proven its potential to transpose the overall EU objectives into the concrete policies in the Member States. The OMC instruments should therefore be adapted and strengthened for the benefit of the new strategy.
- Real dialogue and cooperation between different Council formations and their respective committees responsible for the implementation of the future strategy will be required in order to set coherent policies to reach EU objectives and ensure greater account of country-specific recommendations.
- The Employment Committee and its subgroups have been constantly developing methodologies for monitoring and surveillance of employment policies. Within its remits, the Committee therefore stands ready to support the EPSCO in the transparent surveillance of the new strategy.

- The Committee' suggested changes in the reporting aimed at improving the coordination and efficiency of the governance process. However, an improved coordination of processes should also ensure an adequate and visible focus on employment policies across the strategy.

Targets and benchmarks

- The Employment Committee acknowledges the growing consensus on the limited number of headline targets which should reflect a stronger emphasis on the employment and social dimension of the future strategy. Recent work by EMCO shows that current employment targets and benchmarks could be further improved in order to reflect the coherence of economic and social policies and to indicate objectives and achievements of employment policies.
- Awaiting the Commission proposal, the Committee refers to the analytical work of its Indicators Group that suggests as one of the headline targets for the EU 2020 to aim for an average overall employment rate of 75% at the EU level for the population aged 20 to 64. Moreover, the EMCO Indicators Group is ready to provide well founded input into the further debate, in particular on complementary targets for older workers and women, and to investigate further targets, such as for youth and skills and learning.



The Employment Committee

The Chairman

Brussels, 21 January 2010

Subject: Consultation on the future "EU 2020" strategy

Dear President Barroso,

On behalf of the Committee I would like to welcome the Commission consultation paper on the future EU 2020 strategy and the way it seeks to find an adequate balance in addressing both the consequences of the current crisis and the long term challenges. With a view to support the Commission in drafting its proposal, I would like to underline in particular five points:

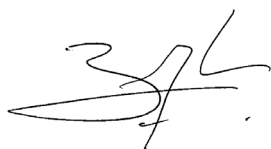
- The Employment Committee affirms that the European Employment Strategy (EES) should play a central role in the EU 2020. Although an important part of EES is reflected in the content of the Commission consultation paper, its role in the overall strategy as well as the role of EPSCO Council in the governance process should be stipulated clearly in accordance with Title IX of the Treaty.
- The key objectives – full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion, competitiveness, coping with climate change and demographic change – need to become more visible in EU 2020. The EU 2020 should reinforce the employment dimension of the strategy and ensure coherent and employment-friendly policies in all areas. This implies that the EES policy guidelines need to be retained in the new strategy. However, to strengthen the effectiveness of policy co-ordination the overall number of integrated guidelines could be reduced as compared to the current structure. In relation to the employment dimension, fewer policy guidelines should be credibly simple and of common concern.

- EU 2020 should build on the lessons learned in the past. Commonly agreed EU targets and benchmarks have proved to be important in obtaining results; they express a commitment to deliver policy objectives, and also to communicate the purpose and achievements of the EES. The Employment Committee with its extensive experience in terms of indicators development is ready to assist the Council and the Commission in that respect.
- The active involvement of the social partners and other stakeholders should be encouraged in order to focus on implementation across countries, to overcome the delivery gaps and strengthen effective policy implementation that would support the objectives of the strategy. Such incentives need development in EU 2020.
- The scope of EU-level involvement in achieving the main EES priorities needs to be given a particular focus. The European Social Fund and other relevant financial instruments need to directly support the delivery of the reforms along the lines of EES objectives.

As an integral part of EMCO's response, let me also submit to you the opinion of the Employment Committee on the "European Employment Strategy within the Post-2010 Lisbon Agenda". The opinion has been endorsed by the EPSCO Council on 30 November and it reflects the Committee's views on the priorities and governance of the future strategy. Though drawn up before the consultation, it is relevant for many of the issues contained therein.

Please accept my apologies for the late reply to the consultation process, this is due to the Employment Committee calendar. Let me also assure you that the Committee is looking forward to the forthcoming Commission proposals on the EU 2020 strategy and is eager to be actively involved in the implementation of the new Strategy.

Yours faithfully,



Bruno Coquet