



The Social Protection Committee

Brussels, 15.12.2011

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SPC work programme for 2012

Introduction

The Social Protection Committee's mandate is set in article 160 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union (TFEU). The Committee will continue pursuing its mandate through the priorities set for 2012.

In its decision of 21 October 2010 (2010/707/EU) on the guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States, the Council mandated the Committee, together with EMCO, to “*monitor progress in relation to the employment and social aspects of the employment guidelines, in line with their respective Treaty-based mandates*”.

The Committee has also received a mandate to follow up the social consequences of the crisis and to provide its views to the Council on the policy advice issued within the framework of Europe 2020.

Achieving these tasks requires streamlining of the work programme of the Committee, changes in its working methods, and an enhanced dialogue with the social partners and the civil society. In 2012, the Committee will also continue its co-operation with the Employment Committee and the Economic Policy Committee with the view of presenting to the Council a coherent set of policy advice within Europe 2020.

The year 2012 will be the first year of the open method of co-ordination (OMC) in the context of Europe 2020 strategy following the SPC opinion endorsed by the EPSCO Council on 9 June 2011. This will also be the first year of the national social reports accompanying the national reform programmes of Member States making the SPC a depositor of the social protection and inclusion developments in the EU.

In 2012, the SPC work programme will be based on three pillars:

1. Structural activities;
2. New activities; and
3. Carry-on activities

1. Structural activities

1.1. Open method of co-ordination in the context of Europe 2020: examination of national reform programmes and national social reports

In 2012, the SPC will start the new OMC in the context of Europe 2020 strategy following its opinion on “*Reinvigorating the social OMC in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy*”¹ as endorsed by the EPSCO Council on 9 June 2011. Upon delivery of the national reform programmes (NRP) and national social reports (NSR)², where relevant, the Committee will analyse them during a multilateral discussion, which will precede the examination of the Commission proposal for country specific recommendations.

¹ Council document 10405/11, Brussels 23 May 2011

² The national social reports will be submitted to the SPC Secretariat

This examination will help the Committee to gain a deeper understanding of the social protection developments in each Member State and in the EU, monitor the poverty reduction trajectories, and discuss the progress towards the objectives of the OMC.

In a later stage, the Committee will examine the proposal for country specific recommendations made by the Commission and provide its opinion to the Council in co-operation with EMCO and the EPC.

Within the framework of the OMC structural activities, the Committee will renew its focus on the OMC **health and long-term care** strand through discussions on developments in health policy, healthy and on active ageing approaches to social protection service provision for old age on the basis of the Commission Staff Working Paper on Long-term care. It will furthermore return to work on health inequalities in response to the Commission Report on Progress in Reduction of Health Inequalities scheduled for 2012.

In 2012, the Committee will contribute to the Commission follow up on the Recommendation on **active inclusion** through carrying out thematic surveillance on the implementation of the three pillars of the active inclusion approach organised in thematic sessions. The Committee will follow on the Euro+Pact commitments for sustainable and adequate pensions, health care and social benefits including for Member States not covered by the Euro+ Pact.

As regards **pensions**, in the course of 2012 the Committee will monitor the implementation of pension country specific recommendations, approve the Pension Adequacy Report (PAR) prepared by the SPC-WG-AGE in co-operation with the ISG and react to the Commission White Paper on pensions. On the basis of its work on pension adequacy and on the White Paper, the Committee will prepare a contribution for the EPSCO Council.

1.2 SPC annual report on the social dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy

The annual report of the SPC will be published towards the end of 2012/beginning of 2013 and its preparation will start in March 2012. The annual report 2012 will present:

- the findings concerning the follow up of the social dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy with a particular focus on the social consequences of the crisis on the basis of an update of the annual questionnaires on data and policy measures;
- the results of the monitoring of the poverty target;
- the findings stemming from the follow up on the OMC indicators;
- the findings concerning the social protection developments as revealed during the examination of the NSR(s) and NRP(s) and the subsequent examination of the country specific recommendations;
- the findings concerning the MS commitments under the Euro+Pact in the area of adequate and sustainable pensions and social benefits;
- the outcomes of the peer review programmes highlighting policy messages and good examples coming out of the peer reviews;
- the main elements of the opinions/position papers tabled by the Committee during 2012;
- The main elements of the thematic and ad hoc work carried out by the working groups of the Committee.

The SPC annual report 2012 will be presented to the EPSCO Council. As from 2012 onwards, the follow up of the crisis – as long as it is needed- will be part of the SPC annual reports.

In 2012, however, the SPC will prepare the report on the social impact of the crisis as a separate thematic report to be adopted by the Committee in January 2012. Short key messages will be sent to the February 2012 EPSCO Council to contribute to the Council message for the European Council in March.

1.3 SPC analysis of EU initiatives

Throughout the year the Committee will react to selected EU initiatives with implications for social protection and inclusion depending on the work programme of the Commission and initiatives taken by the Council.

2. New activities for 2012

2.1 The Committee will pursue its new priorities among the following activities:

2.1.1 The SPC will launch the work on the issue of **financing of social protection systems**. For this purpose the Committee will approve specific terms of reference for a special working group. The scope of the work on financing of social protection systems will be defined in the terms of reference.

2.1.2 The SPC, jointly with EMCO, will prepare **principles for active ageing** (to be adopted in the form of Council conclusions in the second half of 2012).

2.1.3 The SPC will reflect, together with EMCO, on **the social protection floor initiative** of the ILO during the Joint EMCO/SPC meeting under Danish presidency.

2.1.4 The SPC will contribute to the **assessment of the National Roma Integration Strategies** in line with its opinion on Roma Inclusion from 28.04.2011 and with the EPSCO Council Conclusions from 19.05.2011³. The Committee's opinion for the Council (EPSCO in June 2012) on the social protection and inclusion dimension of NRP(s) 2012 will include a section on the National Roma Integration Strategies.

2.2 In addition, the Committee will also consider its contribution toward:

2.2.1 The follow-up to the issue of measuring economic and social progress ("**beyond GDP**") in co-operation with the EPC and the ISG.

2.2.2 The tackling of **homelessness and housing exclusion**. The SPC will consider how the OMC can best contribute to a step-up in the attention given to this issue.

³ Council conclusions "An EU framework for National Roma Integration strategies up to 2020", Council document 10658/11; §31

2.2.3 The potential of **social innovation and experimentation** for social policies on the basis of its conclusions from its informal meeting in Budapest (27-28.04.2011) and from the Wroclaw conference (26.09.2011) with a view to discussing awareness raising, capacity building and financial support actions.

3. Carry-on activities

3.1 The SPC will continue to monitor the developments under the poverty target and improve the portfolio of indicators for the OMC.

3.2 The Committee will continue its work on **SSGI** on the basis of a report from the SSGI working group to be received at the latest mid 2013. This will enable the Committee to review the mandate given to the SSGI group.

3.3 The Committee will prepare its contribution on child poverty based on a report from its special ad-hoc group set up to advise the Commission in developing the initiative announced for 2012.

3.4 The Committee will continue its work on pensions and their adequacy through its working group AGE whose terms of reference will be reviewed after the delivery of the pension adequacy report.

4. Supporting work by the Indicators Sub-group

In line with the priorities set by the SPC for 2012, the ISG will strengthen the analysis of the poverty target, contribute to the reflection on the improvement of the material deprivation measure and to the finalisation of the EMCO-SPC Joint Assessment Framework quantitative tool. It will review its portfolio of social protection and social inclusion indicators in order to be in a position to assess the social dimension of the Europe 2020 Strategy ahead of the mid-term evaluation. The ISG will review in detail its health and long-term care set of indicators. It will contribute actively in the finalisation of the Pension Adequacy Report and the preparation of the Annual SPC Report. The ISG will also work on strengthening the child dimension of the EU indicators portfolio for social protection and social inclusion in the framework of the work of the SPC ad-hoc group on child poverty. It will continue its ongoing work on enhancing the statistical capacity related to the three strands of the social OMC and its active collaboration with Commission services (including Eurostat), other international organizations and research institutions.

5. Working methods for 2012

In its work programme 2012, the Committee will follow new working methods. Each of the elected members of the Bureau will be given a thematic portfolio and precise tasks. The Committee will also amend its rules of procedure with the view of streamlining the functioning of its working groups making provisions for terms of reference adopted and given by the SPC to its working groups, precise calendar for deliverables and for ending of the delegated work.

In the course of 2012, the Committee will pursue its successful co-operation with the Employment Committee on the basis of the joint work undertaken in 2012. The SPC will also try to strengthen its co-operation with the Economic Policy Committee and with the High-level group on demography as well as with the Working party on public health at senior level.