



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**NOTE**

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from : The Polish delegation  
to : COUNCIL (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs)  
Subject : **Information from the Meeting of Ministerial Working Group  
on 18-19 May 2009 in Radziejowice (Poland)  
(Any other business item)**

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Delegations will find attached a note from the Polish delegation.

# Information from the Meeting of the Ministerial Working Group on 18-19 May 2009 in Radziejowice (Poland)

Meeting of the Ministerial Working Group on  
Facing the crisis

*Draft Memorandum – Information for the EPSCO Council*

Poland hosted a Ministerial Working Group on 18-19 May 2009 in Radziejowice (Poland). Representatives of the following countries participated in it: Czech Republic, Estonia, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom and Poland.

This followed the meetings initiated by United Kingdom and Denmark in 2008 in order to discuss specific issues concerning employment and social policy arising out of the Lisbon Strategy objectives in a very informal setting. As on previous occasions, Poland would like to share some of the key outcomes with EPSCO colleagues.

During the last meeting in Poland, the participants discussed how to face the crisis. The idea was to exchange opinions and information on the policy approaches, main strategies and actions that have been taken by the Member States in the context of the economic crisis, as well as to discuss future challenges and recommendations.

The Main Messages of the Employment Summit held on 7th May 2009 in Prague, stressed “*the importance of working in partnership to alleviate the worst effects of the crisis and turn it into an opportunity for transforming Europe into competitive, inclusive, innovative and eco-efficient economy with a high potential for future growth, employment and social protection*”.

Thus, the meeting in Poland was a great opportunity to share the experiences of different countries in tackling the crisis. The meeting demonstrated that there are similar challenges we have to face due to the crisis. However, every country - taking into account its own perspective and specific, national circumstances - has taken its own measures in order to mitigate the impact of the crisis on employment and social policy. The debate allowed participants to gain a better analytical insight into the differences in policy design by Member States.

The debate showed that, among the strategies and actions that have been taken, there are a number of them, which could be considered as generally effective in dealing with the crisis.

Many Member States have taken decisions about e.g.:

- direct measures applied on the labour market, such as reform of labour law systems, safeguarding employment e.g. by means of short-time work allowances and active labour market policy, including: activation of unemployed people and those who are outside the labour market;
- investing in education and training,
- taxes and labour cost reductions,
- investment in infrastructure, research and development.

The discussion during the meeting showed a common agreement concerning the following statements:

- Labour market policy may be an important tool to maintain jobs but it is not the main tool to create jobs - new workplaces are created first and foremost on the basis of measures in the field of economic policy.
- Short-term challenges should not hamper the prospects of meeting long-term challenges, especially financial stability and sustainable development.
- It is important to work within the European Union legal framework, ensuring that the rules governing the internal market should be respected.

- It is essential also to undertake actions on the European level that should support and strengthen the positive effects of the policies taken by the individual Member States.
- Moreover, while safeguarding employment in the situation of crisis, we should continue actions aiming at counteracting social exclusion and promoting, at the same time, the integration of people further from the labour market.
- It is necessary to focus on the situation of young people. This group should be offered counselling, activation measures and education in order to combat youth unemployment and increase employment possibilities for young people. It is also in the interest of employers to create a friendly working environment for young people.
- It is important to consult the social partners on decisions and measures. The social dialogue - especially in the situation of economic downturn - allows for a practical consensus to be sought and makes it possible for the decisions taken to be accepted by society. Helping to establish the conditions for the creation of new jobs is a common responsibility.

Taking into account the above-mentioned issues, in the context of future actions and co-operation between the Member States, it should be noted that:

- Further discussion on the employment and social impact of the economic crisis at European Union level is necessary, especially on measures still to be taken by the Member States.
- Actions undertaken at European level should support and strengthen the positive effects of the policies taken by the Member States.
- Taking into account information regarding the effects of actions already applied in the European Union, the exchange of *best practices* and experiences is a valuable method, which could aid Member States to combat the negative impact of the crisis.