COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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NOTE

from: The Commission
to: COUNCIL (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs)
Subject: Mission for Flexicurity
(Any other business item)

Delegations will find attached a note by the Commission.
NOTE FROM THE COMMISSION
MISSION FOR FLEXICURITY: TERMS OF REFERENCE

On December 5, 2007, the Employment and Social Affairs Council adopted the "Common Principles on Flexicurity", based on the proposal by the European Commission of 26 June 2007. The Council invited the Commission "to launch a public initiative in close cooperation with the European social partners in order to facilitate the ownership of the principles by the relevant stakeholders on the labour market, and to raise the awareness of citizens of flexicurity, its underlying logic, its main elements and its implications, and to keep the Council fully informed of its actions in this respect."

Further to the conclusions of this EPSCO Council, the Commission is launching a public initiative, in close cooperation with the European social partners. This public initiative will take the form of a "Mission for Flexicurity", established by the Commission in partnership with the Slovenian and French presidencies in order to ensure the full integration of the Common Principles of Flexicurity in Community processes.

1 – Context

On December 14, 2007, the European Council endorsed the agreement on the Common Principles reached in the EPSCO Council.

In March 2008, the European Council will endorse the Lisbon Strategy's new cycle of integrated guidelines, which will incorporate references to the flexicurity common principles and national pathways. Subsequently, in the last quarter of 2008 (and then in 2009 and 2010), Member States will report on the implementation of their national pathways based on the common principles and illustrated by the "typical pathways" proposed in the Commission communication of June 2007.
The Commission's public initiative should help Member States prepare their first report on the implementation of the national pathways based on the common principles, in the framework of the National Reform Programmes of Autumn 2008. It shall also help the Commission to monitor Member States' progress on flexicurity policies in the context of the normal processes and mechanisms of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs and of the European Employment Strategy.

2 – Mandate and specific objectives

For the accomplishment of the mission it was entrusted by Council, the Commission launches a public initiative through the establishment of a Mission for Flexicurity, whose mandate will be twofold:

- To assist Member States in promoting the ownership and visibility of the Common Principles of Flexicurity at national and sub-national level, in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders;
- To consider ways to facilitate the integration of flexicurity in the processes and tools of the 2008-2010 cycle of the Lisbon Strategy and European Employment Strategy, and in particular in the implementation of the Integrated Guidelines.

Taking the agreed Common Principles as its starting point, the Mission, in consultation with Member States and social partners, will help promote the practical implementation of the principles in the different national contexts.

On the basis of the results of its consultations, and in the context of the mutual learning exercise, the Mission will report to the EPSCO Council. The main findings will be presented to the EPSCO Council in October 2008, in view of the finalisation of the Report by the end of 2008.
3 – Composition and working methods

The Mission will be composed with 7 permanent members to whom other participants may be added on an ad-hoc basis:

1. **Mr. Vladimir Špidla**, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunity;
2. **Mr. Gérard Larcher**, Senator and Mayor of Rambouillet, former Minister for Employment, representative of the forthcoming French Presidency of the Council;
3. **Mrs. Darja Sencur Pecek**, Professor of labour law, representative of the current Slovenian Presidency of the Council;
4. **Mr. Xavier Prats Monné**, Director for Employment, Lisbon Strategy and International Affairs (European Commission);
5. **Mrs. Maria Helena André**, Deputy Secretary General, European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC);
6. **Mrs. Renate Hornung-Draus**, Chair, Business Europe’s Employment Working Group; Director for European Affairs; Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände (BDA);
7. **Mr. David-Pascal Dion**, Administrator (European Commission).

The Mission will be co-chaired by Mr. Špidla and Mr. Larcher. Mr. Špidla may be represented by Mr. Prats Monne for the daily work of the Mission. The Commission members of the Mission will be responsible for the Mission Secretariat and will record its proceedings.

The Mission will produce, by the end of September 2008, a **draft Mission Report** with preliminary conclusions in advance of the EPSCO Council scheduled for October 2008 that would feed into the reporting of the next Annual Progress Report and Joint Employment Report. The draft will be presented by its co-chairs Mr. Špidla and Mr. Larcher to EPSCO for discussion. The Mission will then present its preliminary findings and consult in October the other relevant stakeholders, and in particular the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the Economic and Social Committee and the Social Partners, with a view to integrate their suggestions into the final report.
The final Mission Report to be presented in December to EPSCO will aim at encouraging the implementation of flexicurity policies, taking into account the common principles.

The Mission will visit a limited number of Member States, and discuss in depth the state of play as regards the development and implementation of the national pathways based on the common principles. As part of a mutual learning perspective, these visits will also give the opportunity to other Member States as well as to other relevant participants to take part in the discussion. As the visits will have to take place essentially between February and September, they should focus on a limited number of issues and countries: i.e. in principle 4/5 visits in voluntary Member States representing the different situations.

The work of the mission and the progress reports following the visits in the Member states will appear on a dedicated Commission website.

4 – Roadmap

The duration of the Mission will be from February to December 2008:

- **February 2008** – Announcement of the launching of the Mission at the "Social Troika" and informal ministerial meeting in Slovenia.

- **March/September** - Country visits at the request of the voluntary Member States.

- **September** - Presentation of the Mission's preliminary conclusions at a "Thematic Review Seminar" in Brussels.

- **October** –Presentation of the draft report to EMCO and EPSCO in order to feed into National Reform Programmes and Cambridge review. Specific presentation to and discussion with the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the Economic and Social Committee and the Social Partners to feed into the final report of the Mission.


- **December 2008** - Presentation of the final report to EPSCO. Agreement on a follow-up to the flexicurity report of the Mission.