

Transparent and predictable working conditions: Council reaches general approach

On 21 June 2018, the Council agreed its negotiating position (general approach) on the directive on transparent and predictable working conditions. On the basis of this mandate, the Council Presidency will start negotiations with the European Parliament once the latter has adopted its position.

New ways of working can bring many advantages to both workers and the economy. However, we have to make sure that we are also able to address any issues which may arise. This draft directive defines a number of minimum rights for workers as part of the response to the challenges of these new forms of employment.

Biser Petkov, Minister for Labour and Social Policies

This draft directive addresses challenges brought by developments in the world of work, including growing flexibilisation of the labour market and, in particular, the increase in the number of 'non-standard' forms of employment, such as temporary employment, part-time and on call work, zero hours contracts, on demand and multi-party employment. New forms of employment are often not as regular or stable as traditional employment relationships, and can lead to reduced predictability for the workers concerned, creating uncertainty over applicable rights and social protection. It can even lead to situations where the workers are put in a very dependant and precarious situation, with uncertainty as to when and if they will work the next day.

The draft directive includes revised obligations to inform workers of the essential aspects of their work, in a written form and in a timely manner. The timing for the receipt of this information has been reduced from two months to a week for initial basic information, and at last a month after the first working day for the rest of the information. This includes information on the place of work, type of work, working time, remuneration, amount of paid leave, the institution receiving the social security contributions, training entitlement, and the procedure for terminating employment. One of the novelties is that if the worker's work pattern is unpredictable, the employer will still have to indicate the reference period in which the worker may be required to work and the minimum advance notice.

A number of minimum rights for workers are also defined, including the right:

- to limit to 6 months the duration of the probationary period at the beginning of the job
- to take up another job with a different employer in parallel

- to know reasonably in advance when work will take place
- to ask for a more secure job and receive a written reply from the employer
- to receive mandatory training cost-free

Background

The Commission presented its proposal on 21 December 2017, as a follow-up to the proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights in November 2017.

This directive will update and repeal existing directive 91/533/EEC on the right for employees to be notified in writing of the essential aspects of the employment relationship (written statement directive).

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[Eurogroup statement on the occasion of its 20th anniversary](#)

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The Eurogroup, the group of euro area finance ministers, celebrates its twentieth anniversary

Today, the Eurogroup commemorated its first meeting 20 years ago in Luxembourg.

Established by the EU leaders shortly before the introduction of the euro, the Eurogroup is an informal body where euro area countries' finance ministers meet to discuss issues related to the single currency.

One of the greatest achievements of European integration, the euro has become a tangible part of the European identity. Since its inception it has grown both in membership and strength, enjoying the robust support of around 340 million people in 19 euro area countries. As the world's second most-used currency, it reinforces Europe's presence on the global scene. The euro has strengthened the internal market, providing an anchor for the economy: citizens and firms across Europe benefit from stable prices and conduct their business across national borders with unprecedented ease.

The Eurogroup's commitment, helped the euro area to withstand the worst financial and economic crisis since the Great Depression. Lessons have been learnt: economic imbalances are better addressed, coordination was strengthened, and new common institutions were built to complement the monetary union and make it more resilient. European citizens never lost confidence in their currency; their currency does not fail them.

At present, with all euro area member states are experiencing economic growth and as new and more rewarding jobs being added, we need to ensure that these gains will be shared among ever more citizens.

To ensure that the Economic and Monetary Union is well equipped to handle future challenges and to improve convergence, the Eurogroup is determined to continue promoting the implementation of sound national policies and to further develop common policies and tools. These are – more than ever – matters of our shared interest in today's rapidly evolving world.

The Eurogroup will pursue ambitious and forward-looking national and European policies that foster strong and equitable growth, investment and employment – delivering lasting prosperity for all.

The Eurogroup remains united in its unwavering political commitment to this common cause – the euro.

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[EIOPA publishes an expanded set of](#)

Solvency II statistics on the European insurance sector

Today, EIOPA published a new set of statistical information on the European insurance sector based on Solvency II regulatory reporting for the fourth quarter of 2017.

In addition to the regular statistics, for the first time EIOPA is publishing new exposure statistics on the European insurance sector. This new data contains:

- Detailed statistics on types of exposure as well as location of exposure both at European Economic Area and individual country level
- Clear asset classifications including government bonds, commercial bonds and equity
- Real estate exposures with a distinction between commercial and residential exposures
- Raw aggregated exposure data to enable more in-depth analysis by end-users

Starting with today's publication, the new exposure data will become a regular part of the EIOPA insurance statistics which can be accessed via [EIOPA's website](#).

Background

Want to know more about statistics? See EIOPA's latest Insight on Data and Statistics: <https://youtu.be/f84XPPk90mM>

Joint press statement following the first Partnership Council meeting between the European Union and Armenia

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On 21 June 2018 the European Union and Armenia held the first meeting of the Partnership Council under the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which was signed on 24 November 2017 and entered into provisional application on 1 June 2018. The Council is the highest body established under the CEPA to supervise the implementation of the Agreement and to discuss issues of mutual interest. Armenia and the EU expressed their willingness to expand and deepen cooperation within the framework of this new legal basis, the Eastern Partnership and the reviewed European Neighbourhood Policy.

The Partnership Council welcomed the peaceful nature of the recent protests in Armenia, which led to a democratic change of government in accordance with the Constitutional framework. The EU praised the general restraint exercised by all sides and called for continued, inclusive dialogue among all political stakeholders, including civil society. The EU welcomed the Armenian Government's clear commitment to fight against corruption and the concrete action the Armenian Government has taken in this field. The EU reconfirmed its support, including technical and financial assistance, for reforms to enhance democracy, rule of law and respect of human rights, as well as to increase prosperity and socioeconomic resilience in Armenia.

The Partnership Council highlighted the importance of amending Armenia's electoral code in line with OSCE ODIHR recommendations to build confidence in the electoral process. The EU expressed its readiness to assist Armenia with the organisation and monitoring of new elections. The Partnership Council also stressed that an effective and independent judicial system is essential for the rule of law and an important precondition for economic and social development; indicated the need for swift progress with the development of a new Criminal Code and a new Criminal Procedural Code, and stressed the importance of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation.

In addition, the Partnership Council underlined the need to build further on the CEPA provisions in the field of trade through sustained efforts in order to secure a stable, business-friendly and predictable trading environment in Armenia, including full and timely implementation of the provisions on the protection of geographical indications. The Partnership Council also underlined the importance of good governance in the field of taxation with respect to the Code of Conduct on Business Taxation.

On energy, the Partnership Council underlined the importance of energy security, energy efficiency, renewables and nuclear safety in line with the CEPA and with the EU-Armenia Partnership Priorities signed on 21 February 2018. On transport, the Partnership Council looked forward to the signature of the EU-Armenia Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement, initialled on 24 November 2017, which will improve market access and contribute to the highest safety, environmental and social standards. Furthermore, Armenia expressed

its willingness to start a Visa Liberalisation Dialogue if all benchmarks are met.

The Partnership Council recalled that the EU-Armenia Partnership Priorities will shape the EU assistance priorities for Armenia. More than EUR 160 million is earmarked for 2017-2021. The Partnership Council stressed the need to make the best use of these resources, with a view to supporting the implementation of the CEPA and improving the living conditions of the citizens in a visible and tangible manner.

The Partnership Council took note of the European Neighbourhood Policy Country Report on Armenia, issued on 6 June 2018, and highlighted the very significant progress in EU-Armenia relations since the May 2017 EU-Armenia Cooperation Council. The Partnership Council decided that future reports would be titled Partnership Reports and focus on the implementation of the CEPA.

Complementary to bilateral ties under the CEPA, the Partnership Council highlighted Armenia's active participation in the Eastern Partnership as an inclusive multilateral framework. Armenia confirmed its commitment to play an important, dynamic and constructive role in the Eastern Partnership framework. Both Armenia and the EU stressed the importance of achieving the Eastern Partnership 2020 deliverables. The EU underlined its readiness to discuss concrete suggestions on the development of cooperation under the Eastern Partnership in specific sectors.

The EU reiterated its support to the OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs' efforts aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Furthermore, the Partnership Council underlined that finding a lasting and credible political solution to the conflict in Syria is of utmost importance. To help integrate Syrian refugees in Armenia, the EU mobilised EUR 3 million under the Madad Fund.

The EU reiterated its commitment to support the normalisation of relations between Armenia and Turkey and encouraged both sides to engage in this process without any preconditions.

Both parties confirmed their commitment to their international obligations with regard to Iran.

The Council was chaired by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Ms. Federica Mogherini. Foreign Minister Mr Zohrab Mnatsakanyan led the Armenian delegation.

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