



**INFORMAL MEETING OF THE
MINISTERS FOR WORK,
EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL
AFFAIRS**

-

CONTENTS OF THE PRESS RELEASE

1 – Programme of events of 10 and 11 July

2 – Presentation of the round table subjects for debates on the day of Friday 11 July

3 – Calendar of events and presentations organised in the social domain during the French Presidency

4 – Programme of action of the French Presidency in the domains of employment and social policies



**INFORMAL MEETING OF
MINISTERS FOR LABOUR AND
SOCIAL POLICY
-
PRESS PROGRAM**

**CHANTILLY – CHATEAU DE MONTVILLARGENNE
10 - 12 JULY 2008**

Thursday 10 July

- 2.30 – 5.00pm** Meeting of the Trio with Social Partners and representatives of the Social Platform, *Debussy room*
- 5.00 – 5.30pm** Press conference, Château de Montvillargenne, *“Jardin” Salon*

Friday 11 July

- 8.00 – 9am** **Breakfast for the Ministers and the Commissioner.**
Topic: *“An idea to give concrete form to a social Europe”*
Villargenne Restaurant - English and French speaking
- 8.45 - 9am** **Welcome to participants**
- 9.10 – 9.40am** **Plenary meeting with feedback on the meetings with Social Partners**
and **the Social Platform**
Debussy room
- 9.45 – 10.15am** **Continuation of the plenary meeting.**

Address by Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
Address by Chairman of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs
Address by the representative of the European Economic and Social Committee
Address by president of the Social Protection Committee
Address by Emilio GABAGLIO, president of the Employment Committee

- 10.15am – 12 pm** **Plenary meeting – GLOBALISATION and CLIMATE CHANGE**
- Keynote speaker : Sven Otto LITTORIN, minister of employment, Sweden
- Answering : Ms.Maravillas ROJO TORRECILLA, General Secretary for Employment, ministry of labor and immigration, Spain
- Discussion moderated by Xavier BERTRAND
- 12.45 -1pm** **Presidency press review**
“Jardin” Salon
- 1.00 – 2.30pm** **Lunch**
Valois, Montmorency, Pompadour, Condé Salons
- 2.30 – 4.00pm** **Continuation of the meeting - DEMOGRAPHY**

Keynote speaker : Petr NECAS, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Cze Republic
Answering : Ms. Joelle MILQUET, Vice Prime Minister, Minister for Employement and Equal Opportunities, Belgium
Discussion moderated by Xavier BERTRAND
- 4.15 – 6pm** **Continuation of the meeting - DIVERSITY**

Keynote speaker : Ms Valérie LETARD, French State Secretary for Solidarity
Answering Ms. Erika SZUCS, minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hungary
Discussion moderated by Xavier Bertrand
- 6.00** **Meeting conclusions by Xavier BERTRAND**
- 6.05 – 6.30pm** **Press conference**
“Jardin” Salon



**INFORMAL MEETING OF THE
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PRESENTATION OF THE SUBJECTS UNDER DEBATE – DAY OF 11 JULY

Globalisation and climate change

Globalisation and climate change: these are the two challenges to which Europe must adapt, and for which it must both anticipate and support the evolutions. Flexicurity will be one of the tools that will enable it, in the social domain, to guarantee both the flexibility of the securities essential to companies in order to evolve on the ever more competitive markets, and also the securities necessary to the employees in order to be more mobile. What relates to mobility and securities also means a more integrated employment market, in order to meet the new requirements and new aspirations of each person. In all these domains, this first subject under debate will be the opportunity to discuss the reinforcement of the coordination within the European Union, in order that it can become a full social participant, more effective, both within and outside of its borders.

The new demographic challenges and the evolution of lifelong activity

The demographic evolution and the ageing of the European population are now a reality. It is therefore necessary to overstep the national frameworks in order to tackle, at a European level, the issue of solidarity between the generations and the practical responses to this. Family solidarity and the conciliation of time, between family life on the one hand and professional life on the other, will therefore largely be tackled during this subject. This meeting will be the opportunity to exchange good practice, compare experience, and go one step further, here too, in the definition of common commitments on these subjects.

Social cohesion and non-discrimination

Europe must also protect those who have difficulties in returning to the employment market, and the most fragile of its citizens. Active inclusion, from this point of view, represents a major issue for the future of social cohesion in Europe. The commitments of the European Union for this coming decade with regard to combating poverty will therefore be discussed, and the resources it intends to implement in order to achieve this. And what relates to social cohesion also means giving the same opportunities to all, without distinction. This is the whole issue of non-discrimination. The different aspects of this issue, and its place in the reform of the social agenda, will be on the menu for the debates. A reform which, obviously, will remain the central theme of all the works of this day, with a desire to trigger common orientations in order to together construct a more concrete Europe, closer to the citizens, more protective also, and bearer of a real social project.



**CALENDAR OF EVENTS
ORGANISED OR SUPPORTED
BY THE FRENCH PRESIDENCY
JULY-DECEMBER 2008**

July 2008

10 to 12 July 2008

➤ **Informal meeting of the European Ministers responsible for work and social policies –**
Château de Montvillargenne – Chantilly

This meeting, chaired by Xavier Bertrand, Minister for Labour, Social Relations, the Family and Solidarity, will be one of the biggest meetings of the French Presidency in the social domain. It will reiterate the importance of the social dimension in the European construction and, from the proposals of the Commission, orientate the future works on the reform of the social agenda.

September 2008

11 and 12 September 2008

➤ **Conference on the mobility of workers in Europe – Paris**

Continuing on from the conference organised in Lisbon on 13 and 14 September 2007 on flexicurity, this conference, organised by the Ministry for Labour, Social Relations, the Family and Solidarity, will address the issue of professional mobility, both functional and geographical.

11 and 12 September 2008

➤ **Half-yearly meeting of the high-level Group on the integration of the dimension of equality between men and women – Paris**

This high-level group is an informal body that participates in discussions and the exchange of information on good practice and experiences on the scale of the European Union. It meets every six months, on the initiative of the Chairman in office.

18 September 2008

➤ **Informal meeting of the European Ministers responsible for the family – Paris**

This meeting, chaired by Xavier Bertrand, Minister for Labour, Social Relations, the Family and Solidarity, and Nadine Morano, Secretary of State responsible for the family, will be the opportunity to review the common orientations that could be reinforced, in the European Union, in favour of the protection of families.

29 and 30 September 2008

➤ **European Equal Opportunities Summit – Paris**

As an extension of the year 2007, European Equal Opportunities Year, this summit, organised jointly by the Ministry for Labour, Social Relations, the Family and Solidarity and the European Commission, will make it possible to draw up an appraisal of discrimination in Europe and to debate the appropriate European strategy to deal with all the difficulties encountered.

2 and 3 October 2008

➤ Forum on the quality of life at work in Europe for the 2010 decade – Lyon

This forum, organised by the *Agence nationale pour l'amélioration des conditions de travail* and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Labouring Conditions, will address the issue of organisation and quality of life at work, notably with a view to the lengthening of professional careers.

3 October 2008

➤ Meeting of the general directors for health and safety at work in the European Union – Paris

This meeting, organised by the Ministry for Labour, Social Relations, the Family and Solidarity, will make it possible to review the implementation of the Community strategy with regard to health and safety in the Member States.

7 October 2008

➤ Informal meeting of the Social Protection Committee – Paris

Since its creation in the year 2000, the Social Protection Committee has acted as coordinator of cooperation between the European Commission and the member countries with a view to the modernisation and improvement of social protection systems.

13 and 14 October 2008

➤ Conference on combating illegal employment practices in Europe - Marseille

This conference, organised by the Ministry for Labour, Social Relations, the Family and Solidarity, has the objective of promoting and deepening European cooperation with a view to combating illegal employment practices, notably on the basis of the proposals made recently by the Commission.

23 and 24 October 2008

➤ MISSOC meeting – Paris

This meeting of agents of the MISSOC information system has the objective of updating the comparable source data concerning the various domains of the social protection systems in the 31 Member States of the MISSOC network.

From 24 to 26 October 2008

➤ 2008 General Meeting of the European Women's Lobby – Lyon

The European Women's Lobby brings together some 4,000 women's associations in Europe. On the occasion of the French Presidency it wishes to perform broad information and communication on the texts and orientations under debate on issues of equality and parity.

28 and 29 October 2008

➤ Forum on general social services in Europe – Paris

Organised by the Ministry for Labour, Social Relations, the Family and Solidarity, this forum will follow up on the meeting of the same name organised in Lisbon in 2007. It will be the opportunity to highlight the contribution of the general social services to social cohesion in Europe, and to ensure that the Community legal framework favours the development and modernisation of these services.

30 October 2008

➤ Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility – Paris – CES-

Organised with the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Commission and the Economic and Social Council, this conference will show, from concrete and new examples, the importance of the partnership for the success of a European approach to CSR.

31 October and 1 November 2008

➤ European Accessibility Conference – Paris

This conference, organised by the Universal Access Association, will bring together 500 people and will have the purpose of disseminating information intended to promote accessibility in practice in all areas of life in society.

November 2008

3 and 4 November 2008

➤ International forum on health at work – Paris

Through the presentation of concrete initiatives established in several countries of the European Union, this forum, organised by the Ministry for Labour, Social Relations, the Family and Solidarity, will encourage the development of the assessment of occupational risks within companies.

7 and 8 November 2008

➤ European “Social security and demographic challenges in a European perspective” conference – Paris

This conference, organised by the *Caisse nationale d'assurance vieillesse*, will be the opportunity to address, in a European perspective, the impact of demographic change on the social security systems.

9 and 10 November 2008

➤ Euromed Labour and Employment conference – Rabat

This conference, organised jointly by the European Commission and the Ministry for Labour, Social Relations, the Family and Solidarity, will address the issue of cooperation relative to work and employment within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean process.

12 November 2008

➤ “New social issues in a mutating Europe” conference – Paris

This conference, organised by the Ministry for Labour, Social Relations, the Family and Solidarity, will debate the issues raised by the new social realities on a European scale, on the basis of the results of the consultation organised by the Commission and with a view to the reform of the European social agenda.

13 and 14 November 2008

➤ Conference on transnational social dialogue – Lyon

This conference, organised by the Ministry for Labour, Social Relations, the Family and Solidarity, will demonstrate the existing practices in the matter of transnational social dialogue, disseminate the results of

the studies and analyses realised, and discuss the status of these agreements and the conditions of their implementation.

13 and 14 November 2008

➤ Conference on occupational equality between men and women – Lille

This conference will be the opportunity to identify the concrete European initiatives which should reinforce occupational equality between men and women, encourage conciliation between family life and professional life, and combat salary inequalities.

14 November 2008

➤ Informal meeting of the European Ministers responsible for equality – Lille

This meeting, chaired by Xavier Bertrand, Minister for Labour, Social Relations, the Family and Solidarity, and Valérie Letard, Secretary of State responsible for Solidarity, will extend, within the European framework, the discussions opened in France at the conference of 26 November 2007 on occupational equality between men and women.

25 and 26 November 2008

➤ Demographics Forum – Brussels

This forum, organised by the European Commission, will address the issue of the consequences of demographic change in Europe and the policies that must respond to this.

27 and 28 November 2008

➤ Conference on the Most Favoured European Woman clause – Paris

This conference, organised by the association “*Choisir la cause des femmes*”, will address the issue of equality of rights between European women, from a comparative study between the different legislations of the twenty-seven Member States.

December 2008

2 December 2008

➤ “Social protection and European citizenship: what social protection for European citizens in 2020?” conference – Brussels

This conference, organised by the *Ecole nationale supérieure de sécurité sociale*, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the European Social Insurance Platform, will open up discussions on the new European social pact.

From 2 to 5 December 2008

➤ European Labour Inspection week – Marcy l’Etoile

This week, organised by the *Institut national du travail, de l’emploi et de la formation professionnelle*, will be the opportunity to tackle all current Community issues affecting work relations and working conditions.

12 December 2008

➤ Meeting of the intergovernmental group responsible for childhood – Paris

The *Europe de l'Enfance* group was founded in the year 2000 on the initiative of France with the objective of exchanging information, good practice and cooperation with regard to the application of children's rights. It meets twice a year.

12 and 13 December 2008

➤ **European conference on new social inspirations of the Community construction** – Paris
This conference, organised by the association ASTREES, will feed the debate on the future developments of the social dimension of the European construction.

French Presidency of the European Union – 2008

PROGRAMME

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Europe is built upon shared values that make its social model unique. That our model has to evolve in step with developments in today's world does not mean that we have to forsake or disfigure it: Europe has to lead the way in the social field as well.

Labor, employment and social policy are not a balancing variable in European construction: they should be at the core of Europe's agenda insofar they have a very direct impact on the daily lives of millions of Europeans.

That Member States have responsibility for rolling out much of this policy does not mean – much to the contrary – that we should not set shared aims and work towards them together.

To do so, Europe no doubt needs common rules. It also has to explore other paths, exchanging best practices, experimenting and discussing, to get to the crux of the issues, understand expectations, and try to meet them. It must also recall its pledge to turn its values into tangible results that European citizens can enjoy in their daily lives.

This is not only a challenge for the European Union's governments: every MEP and every organisation working towards social progress has an active role to play as well.

I wish French presidency time offers an opportunity to a collective momentum for the benefit of social Europe's renewal.

Xavier Bertrand

Minister for Labour, Social Relations,
Family and Solidarity

- **RENEWED SOCIAL AGENDA**

On 2 July 2008, the Commission is presenting a political communication and a number of initiatives to renew Europe's social agenda.

This renewal will have to answer the new European social realities, as they appear in the consultation the Commission raised. The goal is to map out Europe's social aims at home and on the international front for the years to come.

To contribute to this debate, the French Presidency mobilized experts and asked the European Economic and Social Committee to prepare a European social action programme. Their contribution and Commission communication will open the debate at the informal meeting for ministers in charge of labor and social policy in Chantilly, France, on 10 and 11 July. This meeting will provide an opportunity to broach the major challenges shaping Europe's social project, namely globalisation, our joint determination to curb climate change, demographic changes and their consequences on employment and senior citizens situation, and growing diversity in European societies.

We will likewise be discussing Social Europe's legislative, financial and conventional instruments, as well as the open method of coordination and other instruments promoting best-practice exchanges.

Debates about renewing Europe's social agenda will continue through the French Presidency's six-month term and involve all parties – in particular at the expert conference on 12 November in Paris. The EPSSCO Council will also be discussing efforts to renew Europe's social agenda.

- **GETTING BACK TO WORK, FLEXICURITY, MOBILITY AND WORKER PROTECTION**

Globalisation is urging EU Member States to modernise their labour markets, facilitate workers' opportunities to go back to work, and provide for worker protection 'especially in situations involving mobility.

As regards modernising labour markets, the French Presidency is planning to ask the EPSSCO Council to move ahead on the conclusions that the European Mission for Flexicurity set up on 5 December 2007 disclosed, with a view to rolling out shared principles. This mission will present a milestone report to the EPSSCO Council on 2 October and its final report to the EPSSCO Council on 15 December.

Based on this Mission's findings, people experiencing most difficulties in employment-related transitions will be the focus of particular attention. The French Presidency will therefore be holding a conference on juniors and senior workers as a priority on 25 and 26 September in Le Havre. It will recall the importance of employment appeal at a conference on 8 and 9 October and underscore the need to train workers in new skills at a conference on vocational training on 17 and 18 November (both in Paris).

The French Presidency also sees employment mobility management as one of its top priorities. It will underline the fact that Europe's most mobile workers should not be the ones that see their rights curtailed, and will be organising a conference to address both geographic and functional professional mobility on 11 and 12 September in Paris. This conference will focus on the concrete measures that will pave the way for a European framework addressing job mobility. In this perspective, the French Presidency will push ahead with the necessary efforts for the implementation of the pending regulation on the coordination of social security systems, which has been advancing over the past two years.

This presidency will also tackle with one of the mobility's corollaries: the combat against illegal labour practices. In particular, it will discuss about efforts to strengthen administrative cooperation during a conference on illicit work-related practices on 13 and 14 October in Marseilles. A conference in Paris on 17 and 18 November will address welfare-system fraud.

French presidency will be working with the European Parliament on efforts to protect workers' rights based on the 9 June EPSSCO Council compromise, to have adopted the regulations on organisation of working time and protection of temporary agency workers.

It will be responsible for securing EPSSCO Council agreement on the revision of the regulation on European works councils (in particular to clarify information-disclosure and consultation requirements in order to ensure works-council consultation precedes rightsizing plans on internal markets). This revision will be a significant move to bolster social dialogue on issues that concern workers most especially. On this same front, it will be organising a conference on transnational social dialogue on 13 and 14 November in Lyons.

Beside these initiatives in the legislative field, this Presidency will strive to promote best-practice exchanges to improve employee working conditions and prevent occupational diseases, in particular at the 8th international forum on occupational health and working conditions on 3 and 4 November in Paris.

The European Economic and Social Committee will be working with its French counterpart to organise a conference on corporate social responsibility in Paris on 30 October.

Lastly, European ministers in charge of labour and employment will be meeting their counterparts from Mediterranean countries at the Euromed meeting in Marrakech (Morocco), on 9 and 10 November.

- **SOLIDARITY**

Europe's demographic situation has spawned the need for new intergenerational solidarity policy that accommodates the growing number of elderly people in our societies, that addresses their expectations, and that deals with the associated financial constraints. Regardless of their age, European people need welfare systems to take care of the most vulnerable persons, children or care-dependent citizens.

That is why social services of general interest are most important. And the debate about conciliation between service specificity and the Community's legal framework must go on. With this purpose, the French presidency will be organising the second forum on social service of general interest on 28 and 29 October in Paris (following the first forum on this issue, organised at the Portuguese presidency's initiative). This forum will highlight the essential role that social services of general interest play in a wide variety of fields across Europe, and provide an opportunity to review their contribution to social cohesion and solidarity within European societies. It will furthermore underline the specific aspects of social services of general interest, and reveal the extent to which a road map would help to clarify their legal status on the internal market.

Solidarity and cohesion are at the core of Europe's social model and entail promoting active inclusion opportunities for the people on the furthest fringes of the labour market. The French Presidency will also support shared principles of active inclusion on the basis of a recommendation that the Commission will present. To that end, it will be organising the 7th European round table on poverty and social exclusion on 15 and 16 October in Marseilles, and presenting its conclusions for the first time to all the European ministers in charge of these issues. It will be likewise be organising a conference on social experimentation to catalyse exchanges in Grenoble, on 21 and 22 November.

- **FOR GENDER EQUALITY and AGAINST DISCRIMINATIONS**

Fourteen adopted regulations address the principle of equality between men and women (which has been included in European treaties since 1957). Policies have been developed at European level and transferred to national legislations in order to promote gender equality mainstreaming and to spur positive action against inequalities. They have improved the situation, but efforts are still necessary to improve women's employment conditions, bridge the enduring salary gap, and facilitate conciliation between work and family life. Doing so will address a top priority on the social-justice agenda. But it will also address the economic and demographic challenges that Europe is facing today.

Ministers in charge of equality will be addressing all these questions at an informal meeting in Lille on 14 November, following a conference on equal job and vocational training opportunities for men and women on 13 and 14 November there. These two gatherings will provide opportunities to revise legislative initiatives underway which aim to facilitate conciliation between work and family life, as the revision of regulations on parental leave and maternity leave. Attention will be paid also to the revision of the regulation on equal opportunities for self-employed men and women. Conclusions on the implementation of the Beijing action plan at European level will lastly be submitted to the EPSSCO Council.

Against discriminations, the French Presidency will be striving to obtain necessary consensus on the regulation proposal that the Commission will be presenting on 2 July to put into effect the principle of equal treatment, outside employment (which is already addressed in legislation). The European summit on equal opportunities that it will be hosting in Paris on 29 and 30 September will likewise address discrimination from a broad-based perspective. This summit will take over from the eponymous meeting that the German Presidency organised, and from the conference closing the Year of Equal Opportunities for All during the Portuguese Presidency.