

## Tiskové avízo

Press Notice

Avis d'information à l'attention de la presse

In Prague 6 March 2009

# Minister Nečas will chair the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO)

**Formal meeting of the Council will take place on 9 March in Brussels. Traditionally, the main topic on the agenda is the preparation of the Spring European Council.**

As the main point on the agenda, the preparation of the Spring European Council will require adoption of several documents relating to the Lisbon Strategy. The Czech Presidency has prepared questions relating to these issues, which will form the basis of a planned structured discussion by the ministers. The questions deal primarily with the consequences of the financial crisis for employment. 'In particular, we would like to emphasise that short-term measures adopted in response to the crisis should correspond with long-term structural reforms and they should not pose a threat to the long-term sustainability of public finances,' stated Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Labour and Social Affairs Petr Nečas.

The second key topic on the agenda of the Council will be the proposed revision of the directive on maternity leave. The planned policy discussion should contribute to finding an acceptable compromise.

A proposal for revision of the Regulation on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, which is a part of the European Economic Recovery plan, is also on the agenda of the meeting where the Czech Presidency will submit a progress report.

The Presidency has also prepared two proposals for the Council conclusions which the ministers of the EU Member States should adopt. The first proposal relates to the communication of the Commission on new skills for new jobs and anticipation and satisfaction of the labour market requirements. The second proposal concerns mobility and

free movement of persons within the European Union, one of the key priorities of the Czech Presidency. Above all, these proposals for the Council conclusions appeal to Member States to analyse the obstacles for the mobility of workers and to contribute to their elimination. Furthermore, the Commission is called upon to play its role as guardian of the treaties and to examine the Member States' justifications for prolonging the transition period for the free movement of workers.

At a work lunch the ministers should discuss the preparations of the summit to be held in May, which is devoted to the consequences of the crisis on employment. The Presidency will also briefly inform on the progress of the revision of the working time directive.

The Council will meet for one day only; the part of the meeting relating to health and consumer protection will not take place.

A press conference in presence of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Labour and Social Affairs Petr Nečas and Commissioner responsible for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Vladimír Špidla is preliminarily scheduled for 16:20 in the building of the European Council.

## **Agenda of the EPSCO meeting on 9 March 2009**

- 1. Adoption of the preliminary agenda of the meeting**
- 2. Approval of the list of 'A' items**

### **3. Preparation of the Spring European Council**

(a) Key Messages based on (b) to (f)

- Adoption
- Policy debate

(b) Communication from the Commission to the European Council: "A European Economic Recovery Plan"

(c) Joint Employment Report 2008/2009

- Adoption

(d) Proposal for a Council Decision on Guidelines for the Employment Policies of the Member States

- General approach

(e) Implementation of the Lisbon Strategy Structural Reforms in the context of the European Economic Recovery Plan - Annual country assessments: Recommendation for a Council Recommendation on the 2009 up-date of the broad guidelines for the economic policies of the Member States and the Community and on the implementation of Member States' employment policies

- Political agreement

(f) Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2009  
- Adoption

(g) Report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on equality between women and men, 2009

(h) Preparation of the Tripartite Social Summit  
- exchange of opinions

**4. Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 on establishing the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund**

- Progress report

**5. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: New Skills for New Jobs "Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs"**

- Adoption of Council conclusions

**6. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: The impact of free movement of workers in the context of EU enlargement - Report on the first phase (1 January 2007 – 31 December 2008) of the Transitional Arrangements set out in the 2005 Accession Treaty and as requested according to the Transitional Arrangement set out in the 2003 Accession Treaty**

- Professional and geographical mobility of the workforce and the free movement of workers within the European Union

- Adoption of Council conclusions

**7. Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Directive 92/85/EEC on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding**

- Policy debate

**8. AOB**

(a) Communication from the Commission: Contribution to the Spring European Council  
- Information from the Commission

(b) Work Programme of the Employment Committee 2009  
- Oral information from the Chair

(c) Work Programme of the Social Protection Committee 2009  
- Oral information from the Chair

(d) Presidency Conferences:

(i) "Parental Childcare and Employment Policy: Collision or Complementarity"

- Oral information from the Chair

(ii) "Strengthening EU Competitiveness- the Potential of Migrants on the Labour Market",  
Prague, (26-27 February 2009)

(iii) "EU Enlargement - 5 years after", (Prague, 2 March 2009)

- Information from the Presidency

## **9. Work lunch**

a. Preparations of informal EU summit on consequences of the crisis on employment and social

b. Information on the progress of the informal trilogue on the draft for a revision of the working time directive

c. Proposed revision of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund.