



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Research and Information Service Briefing Paper

Paper 49/14

07 February 2014

NIAR 319-14

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European Commission Legislative & Non Legislative Proposals Q2 2014

Research and Information Service

Table 1: European Commission Legislative Proposals 2014 Q2

NIAR 319-2014

Title	Estimated date of Adoption	Current stage of progress	Type of Initiative	Description	Perceived Relevance to Northern Ireland	Current Prioritisation	Indicative date of when Committee can become involved	Any Identified Subsidiarity Issues?	NI Executive Priority/Objective (2013/14 priorities)
First revision of Regulation 883/2004 and Regulation 987/2009 (Previously known as "Labour Mobility Package" - the package contains: Chapeau Communication on mobility; Coordination of social security systems; Revision of Regulation 883/2004 and Regulation 987/2009; and Communication on highly mobile worker).	June 2014	No information has been found regarding the proposal including a search of Prelex and the Register of Commission Documents which suggests that work is still underway.	Legislative	This initiative is linked to the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy which calls for the EU to encourage mobility and for European citizens to make more use of their freedom of movement.	The initiative could contribute to promoting and facilitating the free movement of persons within the EU by updating the rules on the coordination of social security schemes within the European Union. It should be noted that the UK Government has expressed reservations regarding this package, in specific regard of long term care and the extension of the export of benefits beyond 3 months. As stated in a recent publication on the 2014 CWP: <i>The Government would be concerned about changes that mean we would have to pay more benefits than we do now.</i>	Low to medium (However, this may be subject to change as more information becomes available)	The Communication appears to be still in development.	No identified issues at this stage. However this may be subject to change.	Competitiveness and Employment: Promote and facilitate mobility.
Proposal for a recast* Regulation (EEC) NO 337/75 of the council of 10 February 1975 establishing a European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.	July 2014	No information has been found regarding the proposal including a search of Prelex and the Register of Commission Documents which suggests that work is still underway.	Legislative	The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) provides information on and analysis of vocational education and training systems, policies and practice. In line with the Common approach on decentralised agencies membership of CEDEFOP's governing board should be reviewed and streamlined. Other aspects of the governance of this agency could also be reviewed on this occasion. Such changes require a recast of the founding regulation of the agency.	CEDEFOP mainly provides advice and analysis on vocational education in Europe. Whilst this information is useful, the recast of the Regulation should not have any impact on Northern Ireland as it is focused on the governance of CEDEFOP rather its function.	Low	The proposal appears to be still in development.	No identified issues at this stage. However this may be subject to change.	Competitiveness and Employment: Increase the skills profile of the working population; prepare for and influence EU Decision making processes in respect of the 2014-2020 structural funds programmes, the Trans-European Networks and the Connecting Europe Facility.
Proposal for a EP and Council Regulation No 1365/75 on the creation of a European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.	3rd Quarter 2014	No information has been found regarding the proposal including a search of Prelex and the Register of Commission Documents which suggests that work is still underway.	Legislative	To revise the founding regulation for the agency in order to take account of the conclusions and recommendations of the Inter-institutional Working Group on Agencies (IWGA) - composition of the Governing Board, nomination of Director.	The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) is a tripartite European Union Agency, whose role is to provide knowledge in the area of social and work-related policies. The IWGA was established to assess the effectiveness, accountability and transparency of decentralised agencies. The proposal would bring Eurofound into line with IWGA recommendations. As such, this would have limited impact on Northern Ireland.	Low	The proposal appears to be still in development.	No identified issues at this stage. However this may be subject to change.	Competitiveness and Employment: Increase the skills profile of the working population; prepare for and influence EU Decision making processes in respect of the 2014-2020 structural funds programmes, the Trans-European Networks and the Connecting Europe Facility.

* A Recast Directive is similar to codification in that it brings together a number of legislative acts into a single act. However, a Recast Directive involves substantial changes to the original Act or Acts, with amendments made to the Directive as part of the process.



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Table 2: European Commission Non-Legislative Proposals 2014 Q2

NIAR 319-2014

Title	Estimated date of Adoption	Current stage of progress	Type of Initiative	Description	Perceived Relevance to Northern Ireland	Prioritisation	Indicative date of when Committee can become involved/potential actions	Any Identified Subsidiarity Issues?	NI Executive European Priority/Objective (2013/14 priorities)
Community framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation.	April 2014 - please note, in a paper produced on the 18 December 2013, it states that the Framework will come into force on the 1st July 2014.	Consultation completed on 24 February 2012. Issues paper produced on 12 December 2012.	Review	Framework is directed at Member States and aims to facilitate their use of State aid for research, development and innovation. The current RDI Framework expires by the end of 2013. The objective of the revision is to examine whether the current framework should be maintained or modified. It will in particular be examined whether modifications are appropriate in order to ensure that the State Aid rules or RDI fully contribute to the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy.	State aid made available to Universities (as defined in the Regulation as Research Organisations) is included within this review. As such, any modifications proposed to the framework may impact in NI.	Low to medium (as it is not yet known what the proposed modifications are, or even if any will be suggested, this prioritisation may be prone to change.)	An EU Commission paper dated the 18 December 2013 states that: <i>Member States are invited to give their explicit unconditional agreement to the proposed appropriate measures within two months from the date of publication of this framework in the Official Journal of the European Union.</i> The Committee may wish to ask the Department if it has been contacted as part of the review, and if so what its response was.	No identified issues at this stage. However this may be subject to change.	Innovation and Technology: Maximise the drawdown of Horizon 2020 funds for NI by promoting increased participation in EU research, technology and innovation programmes by NI companies, universities, research base and elsewhere in the public sector.
Communication on job creation in the 'green economy'.	May 2014	The Communication will most likely be part of the Resource efficiency package.	Non-legislative (Communication)	The Communication will focus on the main actions to support job creation and improve resource efficiency at the workplace as one of the main challenges for Europe's competitiveness. It will focus on key economic sectors and on anticipation and emerging skills development for a more resource efficient economy.	A 2011 ECORYS report on behalf of the Department for Employment and Learning identified that there will be a growing need for skills development within the green economy in Northern Ireland, with the sustainable energy sector in need of an estimated 3,300 skilled workers in 2011-2015 period.	Low - Medium, although this may be prone to change as further information becomes available.	This process is currently ongoing. The Committee may wish to ask the Department if it has been consulted in regards the development of the Communication.	No identified issues at this stage. However this may be subject to change.	Competitiveness and Employment: Increase the skills profile of the working population.
Chapeau Communication on mobility - Mobility package.	June 2014	The Communication should accompany the First Revision of Regulation 883/2004 and Regulation 987/2010 on coordination of social security systems (as discussed elsewhere in this paper).	Chapeau Communication	Aim is to present the achievements to enhance cross-border mobility in various fields including labour law and active labour market policy.	Enhanced cross-border mobility may be of benefit to Northern Ireland's economy and population in terms of skills exchanges, skill development and increased accessibility and attractiveness as a business location.	Low - Medium, although this may be prone to change as further information becomes available.	This process is currently ongoing.	No identified issues at this stage. However this may be subject to change.	Competitiveness and Employment: Increase the skills profile of the working population; Promote and facilitate mobility.

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First stage consultation on Possible consolidation of Information and Consultation Directives (REFIT). Previously known as: Recast* and merger of three Directives in the area of information and consultation of workers.	June 2014	No information has been found regarding the proposal including a search of Prelex and the Register of Commission Documents which suggests that work is still underway. SWD 'Fitness Check' completed in July 2013 (SWD 2013 293).	Consultation	Recast and merger of three Directives further to a fitness check published in July 2013 in order to address some of the issues raised by the Commission SWD (and improve the operation of the Directives). This initiative is subject to a consultation of social partners. The three Directives are: <input type="checkbox"/> Directive 98/59/EC on collective redundancies; <input type="checkbox"/> Directive 2001/23/EC on transfers of undertakings; and <input type="checkbox"/> Directive 2002/14/EC establishing a general framework relating to information and consultation of workers in the EC.	The SWD identified a number of gaps in the existing legislation, including the exclusion of seafarers, smaller enterprises and public administration from the scope of the Directives. As NI has a large public sector and the majority of its private sector businesses are SMEs, changes to this legislation may have a significant impact for both employees and employers. No information was found on what approach the Recast will take in regards this.	Medium (this may change due to what scope the Recasting takes)	The Communication appears to be still in development.	No identified issues at this stage. However this may be subject to change.	None related.
Research and innovation as new sources of growth.	2nd Semester 2014	No information has been found regarding the proposal including a search of Prelex and the Register of Commission Documents which suggests that work is still underway.	Communication	Following on from the Innovation Union, this Communication will assess how the innovation economy promotes competitiveness and provide an evidence base for identifying priority investments alongside the necessary structural reforms in the context of fiscal consolidation and unlocking growth potential.	A key aspect of the NI Economic Strategy is the development of the Knowledge Economy base in NI. This Communication could be a useful document in its further development.	Low - medium	Review of available information found that no date has yet been set for a public consultation.	No identified issues at this stage. However this may be subject to change.	Innovation and Technology: Maximise the drawdown of Horizon 2020 funds for NI by promoting increased participation in EU research, technology and innovation programmes by NI companies, universities, research base and elsewhere in the public sector.
Commission Observations to Member States proposals of partnership agreements for the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) for the period 2014-2020.	June 2014	No information has been found regarding the proposal including a search of Prelex and the Register of Commission Documents which suggests that work is still underway.	Staff Working Document	The ESIF compose the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, all under the umbrella title of the Common Strategic Framework. The SWD will contain observations to MS proposals of partnership agreements. In the Partnership Agreement each Member State will set out their strategy and rationale for how the Funds are to be deployed to complement the EU 2020 strategy and domestic initiatives for sustainable jobs and growth.	Information on the partnership agreements is limited. The Committee may wish to ask the Department for any information it has on the development of the Partnership Agreements here in NI, including how they will operate, the links being created between the various fund administrative bodies and how they will meet NI, UK and EU targets.	High (may be subject to change as information becomes available).	The Communication appears to be still in development.	No identified issues at this stage. However this may be subject to change.	Competitiveness and Employment: Increase the skills profile of the working population; prepare for and influence EU Decision making processes in respect of the 2014-2020 structural funds programmes, the Trans-European Networks and the Connecting Europe Facility.

