



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Research and Library Service Briefing Paper

Paper 47/11

2 March 2011

NIAR 151 - 2011

Eoin Murphy

European Commission Work Programme 2010: Employment and Learning (Updated March 2011)

1 Introduction

The following Briefing Paper has been written for the Committee for Employment and Learning to inform their scrutiny of strategic initiatives and legislation being produced by the European Commission which falls under the Committee's remit.

This draft of the paper is an update of a previous version submitted on the 11 of October 2010 and includes details on the progress of initiatives and legislation.

2 Background to this Paper

The Committee for the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister's *'Report on its Inquiry into Consideration of European Issues'*, which was published in January 2010, contained a series of recommendations to the Executive together with a number of actions for the Assembly to address.

Action 8 of the report stated that:

The Committee [COFMdFM] will highlight to all statutory committees the importance of their role when dealing with European issues and departments should take into consideration European policies and directives when completing business plans and strategies. Research and Library Services will screen the annual European Legislative and Work Programme and produce a prioritised menu of scrutiny topics relevant to each statutory committee. For those scrutiny topics which are of particular interest to statutory committees, the Research and Library Service should monitor the development of policy at European level and provide regular information updates which would, amongst other things, identify all relevant draft legislative acts. The Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister will receive all information from Research and Library Services. The Brussels Officer will also have input here.

Action 8 requires the Research and Library Service to support Committees by:

- i. screening the annual European Legislative and Work Programme;
- ii. producing a prioritised menu of scrutiny topics relevant to each statutory committee;
- iii. monitoring the development of policy at European level;
- iv. providing regular information updates; and
- v. identify all draft legislative acts.

To support the work of the Committee for Employment and Learning, the Employment and Learning Researcher will monitor development of the initiatives of the 2010-2014 CWP. The Researcher will also monitor the development of any new policy proposals, legislative or otherwise, in these broad areas and provide updates to the Committee as appropriate.

3 European Commission Work Programme 2010

Each year the European Commission publishes a work programme which sets out the legislative, as well as non-legislative proposals, which it will put forward during the forthcoming year.

The work programme, which is usually published in the autumn (although the 2010 CWP was published in March 2010) is particularly important, as the Commission has the 'right of initiative' within the European Union. As such, the Commission alone is responsible for drawing up proposals for new European legislation, which it presents to Parliament and the Council.

The Commission is also responsible for managing and implementing EU policies and the budget. Furthermore, together with the Court of Justice, it is responsible for making sure EU law is properly applied in all the member states.

On 31 March 2010, the European Commission published its 2010 Work Programme with the following overview:

The Commission Work Programme (CWP) 2010 translates the priorities of President Barroso's political guidelines into concrete actions. Overall, emphasis of the CWP is on (1) putting the Europe 2020 Strategy into practice thereby building the basis for exiting the economic crisis and creating sustainable growth and jobs (2) enhancing the rights and security of European citizens and (3) strengthening Europe's role on the world stage.¹

The format of the 2010 work programme differs from that of previous years' legislative and work programmes. For the first time the work programme provides a four-year, rather than an annual, overview of the Commission's legislative and non-legislative priorities. This format is designed, not only to improve predictability for all stakeholders, but also to facilitate cooperation with the other EU institutions.

The Commission provides annual updates of the Work Programme, identifying new annual strategic initiatives and adapting the multiannual strand's as appropriate.

Whilst the body of the Work Programme describes the Commission's ambitions and commitments for 2010 and beyond, a number of annexes provide detail on individual initiatives it plans to take forward.

Annex I of the CWP contains a list of 34 strategic initiatives which the Commission commits to deliver in 2010, operating under the following titles:

- Tackling the crisis;
- Advancing the "Europe 2020" flagship initiatives;
- Tackling Europe's bottlenecks;
- Putting people at the Heart of European action and building a citizens' Europe;
- Ensuring an open and secure Europe;
- Addressing long-term societal changes;
- Deepening Europe's trade agenda; and
- Modernizing EU instruments and the ways of working.

Table 1 below identifies the initiatives the Commission is scheduled to adopt in 2010.

¹EU Commission The Commissions Work Programme http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/index_en.htm

Please note, in the October 2010 version of this paper a number of these initiatives had yet to be adopted and have since been published. Appendix 1 to this briefing paper provides additional detail on the Strategic Initiatives.

Table 1: Strategic initiatives the Commission is scheduled to adopt in 2010

Nature of initiative	Title of the document	Date of publication
<i>Communication</i>	European Plan for Research and Innovation	3 rd Quarter 2010 Green paper released on the 9 th of February 2011
<i>Communication</i>	Youth on the Move Initiative	Adopted on the 15 th of September 2010
<i>Communication</i>	Communication on Youth Employment	4 th Quarter 2010
<i>Non-Legislative action</i>	Agenda for New Skills and Jobs	Launched on the 23 rd of November 2010
<i>Proposal</i>	Revision of the Working Time Directive	Carried over to CWP 2011

Annex II of the CWP contains a list of 280 major proposals under consideration during 2010 and beyond. These are tentative prospects for the rest of the mandate AND are broken down under a number of titles, which map closely to the Departments and Services of the European Commission². Table 2 below lists the titles under which the possible strategic and priority initiatives are presented.

Table 2: Possible Strategic and Priority Initiatives Proposal Titles

Agriculture and Rural Development	Humanitarian Aid & Crisis Response
Budget	Industry and Entrepreneurship
Climate Action	Internal Market and Services
Competition	Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship
Development	Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
Digital Agenda	

² The term 'Commission' is used within the European Union in two senses. First, it refers to the team of people from Member States appointed to run the institution and take its decisions. Secondly, the term 'Commission' refers to the institution itself and to its staff.

Economic and Monetary affairs	Regional Policy
Education, Culture and Youth	Research and Innovation
Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion	Services of general interest
Energy	Smart Regulation
Enlargement and Neighborhood Policy	Taxation and Customs Union
Environment	Trade
Health and Consumers	Transport
Home Affairs	

Table 3 carries on from table 2 and lists the possible strategic and priority initiatives covered in 2010 and beyond which may be of interest to the Committee for Employment and Learning. As with Table 1, a number of these initiatives have been introduced or transferred to the next CWP. These changes are highlighted in bold.

Also included (where available) are the Commissions reference numbers for the initiatives.

Table 3: Indicative list of possible strategic and priority initiatives under consideration in 2010 and beyond

Nature of initiative	Description
<i>Proposal</i> (COM/2011/0098)	Recommendation on early school leaving (introduced on the 31st of January 2011)
<i>Proposal</i>	Integrated youth on the move programme 2014 – 2020*
<i>Proposal</i>	Strategic Innovation agenda of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) (to be submitted to the EU Commission June 2011)
<i>Communication</i> (COM/2010/0296)	A new Impetus for European Vocational Education and Training Cooperation 2010 – 2020 (introduced on the 9th June 2010)
<i>Proposal</i> (COM/2010/0478)	Promoting learning mobility of young people (introduced on the 15th of September 2010)
<i>Communication</i> (OJC 135)	Initiative on new European competences supporting lifelong learning and the ‘new skills for new jobs’ initiative (included in CWP 2011)

Nature of initiative	Description
<i>Communication</i>	Proposal for benchmarks on mobility and employability*
<i>Report</i>	Report on the implementation of the education and training Open Method of Coordination during 2009 – 11*
<i>Communication</i>	Modernisation of higher education (Included in CWP 2011 - expected to be adopted in September 2011)
<i>Proposal</i>	Implementation of Posted Workers Directive (Legislative initiative expected to be adopted in the 4th quarter of 2011)
<i>Communication</i>	EU disability strategy 2010-2020 (launched on the 15th of November 2010)
<i>Proposal</i>	Amendment of several labour law EC Directives with a view to including seafaring workers or vessels within their scope (expected to be adopted in 2011)
<i>Proposal</i>	Regulation on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) 2013 – 2020*
<i>Proposal</i>	Decision on the Progress Programme 2013-2020*
<i>Proposal</i> (Ref:32010L0018)	Steps to improve the legal and policy framework on reconciliation regarding parental leave*

Please note, dates for expected or actual adoption of initiatives marked with an “*” could not be confirmed at this time.

Please see Appendix 2 for additional details on the possible strategic and priority initiatives under consideration in 2010 and beyond.

A list of simplified proposals and withdrawals is included as Annexes III and IV to the Work Programme.

At a later date, should it become necessary to prioritise these for continued monitoring, the criteria listed below will be employed:

- Legislative versus non-legislative proposal (legislative higher priority);
- Stage in policy development (earlier higher priority);
- Relevance (links to other committee work for example);
- Significance (based on likely impact, for example financial, of initiative in NI); and

- Relevance to Executive's Priorities for European Engagement³.

In addition to updating the Committee directly via the Committee Clerk, the Research & Library Service's online current awareness tool 'HORIZON' will be used to disseminate information on developments more widely⁴.

A number of the key initiatives identified are legislative proposals, and will therefore be subject to a subsidiary check which is triggered by draft legislation.⁵ Emerging policy developments in the areas highlighted above will also be monitored closely to identify any draft legislative acts that may emerge at a later date.

4 Relevant Legislation

The table below provides information on upcoming and proposed legislation which may have an impact in the UK and NI and which may be of note to the Committee.

Table 4: Upcoming and Proposed EU Legislation⁶

Topic	Date of EU Legislation	EU Legislation Title	Date enacted in UK/NI	Title of UK Legislation (if any)	Potential Impact/target areas
Employment: Agency Workers	1 st October 2010	Temporary Agency Workers Directive 2008	Due to come into force 1 st October 2011.	The Agency Workers Regulations 2010	All agency workers have a right to equal treatment over basic employment and working conditions after 12 weeks in a given job.
Parental Rights: Additional EU maternity rights proposed	2011/2012	Pregnant Workers Directive (proposed amendments) – still at an early stage of development	No date as of yet	N/A	Proposed changes to maternity rights – unlikely to have a major impact on the UK as a result of existing maternity provisions. The suggested 20 weeks full maternity pay would have implications for the UK. The EU Council has final decision making power and it is unlikely to accept the Amendments in full.
Parental Rights: Additional EU maternity rights for the self employed	The Directive came into force on the 4 th August 2010	EU Directive on Equal Treatment for Self-employed Workers	Member nations have two years to introduce it to national law ⁷	N/A	Entitles self-employed women and assisting female spouse and life partners of self-employed workers to access maternity benefits.

³OFDFM Priorities for European Engagement Action Plan 2008-09
http://www.ofdfmni.gov.uk/priorities_for_european_engagement-action_plan_2008-2009_3mb_-2.pdf

⁴NI Assembly, Horizon <http://assist/Horizon/Default.aspx>

⁵ Article 5 of the Lisbon Treaty means that National Parliaments become guardians of the principle of subsidiarity, which is formulated to ensure that the EU only acts within the limits of the powers conferred on it by the Member States.

⁶ People Management 9th September 2010 Legislative Timetable
<http://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/pm/subjects/employment-law/legal-developments/legislative-timetable.htm> (first accessed 4th October 2010)

⁷ EU Business 7th June 2010 New EU law: self-employed workers obtain maternity leave right <http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/self-employed-benefits.706> (first accessed 7th October 2010)

Topic	Date of EU Legislation	EU Legislation Title	Date enacted in UK/NI	Title of UK Legislation (if any)	Potential Impact/target areas
Parental Rights: Increase in Parental Leave	Adopted on the 8 th March	EU Parental Leave Directive	Member nations have two years to introduce it to national law	2011/2012	The increase is unlikely to have a major impact in the UK, since statutory parental leave is unpaid and it is relatively uncommon for employees to take it.
Unions and Employee Representation: Changes to EU Works Councils	June 2011	Transnational Information and Consultation of Employees (Amendment) Regulations 2010	The UK has until the 5 th June 2011 to implement the revised directive.	TICE ⁸ (Amendment) Regulations – went before UK Parliament on the 6 th April 2010	Amendments made to the directive on European Work Councils (EWC ⁹) to reduce uncertainty and increase the number of EWCs. The majority of the provisions are expected to come into force in the UK on the 5 th June 2011.
Working Time: EU discussions for future of opt-out	2011	Working Time Directive (proposed amendments)			European discussions on proposed changes to the EU directive have been ongoing for some time including the scope for workers to opt-out from the maximum average 48 hour working week and whether or not time spent 'on-call' should be treated as working time. This could potentially lead to significant changes to the UK working time laws in due course.

⁸ Transnational Information and Consultation of Employees Regulations

⁹ Employees who work for a large multinational company that has employees in the UK and another member state of the European Economic Area may have the right to be represented by a European Work Council

Appendix 1: Initiatives Scheduled for Adoption in 2010

Further details of the possible strategic and priority initiatives under consideration are provided below:

European Plan on Research and Innovation¹⁰

The aim of the Research and Innovation Plan is to implement the innovation related elements of the Europe 2020 strategy, in particular the flagship action "Innovation Union", i.e. to re-focus R&D and innovation policy on the challenges facing our society, such as climate change, energy and resource efficiency, health and demographic change. Its intention is that every link in the innovation chain should be strengthened, from 'blue sky' research to commercialisation.

In terms of its main objectives, the Commission will work at EU level:

- To complete the European Research Area, to develop a strategic research agenda focused on challenges such as energy security, transport, climate change and resource efficiency, health and ageing, environmentally-friendly production methods and land management, and to enhance joint programming with Member States and regions;
- To improve framework conditions for business to innovate (i.e. create the single EU Patent and a specialised Patent Court, modernise the framework of copyright and trademarks, improve access of SMEs to Intellectual Property Protection, speed up setting of interoperable standards; improve access to capital and make full use of demand side policies, e.g. through public procurement and smart regulation);
- To launch 'European Innovation Partnerships' between the EU and national levels to speed up the development and deployment of the technologies needed to meet the challenges identified. The first may include, for example: 'building the bio-economy by 2020', 'the key enabling technologies to shape Europe's industrial future' and 'technologies to allow older people to live independently and be active in society';
- To strengthen and further develop the role of EU instruments to support innovation (e.g. structural funds, rural development funds, R&D framework programme, Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP), Strategic Energy Technology (SET) plan), including through closer work with the European Investment Bank (including innovative financial instruments) and streamline administrative procedures to facilitate access to funding, particularly for SMEs and to bring in innovative incentive mechanisms linked to the carbon market, namely for fast-movers; and

¹⁰ European Commission Impact Assessment 2010 Roadmaps
http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/planned_ia/roadmaps_2010_en.htm (first accessed 6th September 2010)

- To promote knowledge partnerships and strengthen links between education, business, research and innovation, including through the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, and to promote entrepreneurship by supporting Young Innovative Companies.

At national level, Member States will need:

- To reform national (and regional) R&D and innovation systems to foster excellence and smart specialisation, reinforce cooperation between universities, research and business, implement joint programming and enhance cross-border co-operation in areas with EU value added and adjust national funding procedures accordingly, to ensure the diffusion of technology across the EU territory;
- To ensure a sufficient supply of science, maths and engineering graduates and to focus school curricula on creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship; and
- To prioritise knowledge expenditure, including using tax incentives and other financial instruments to promote greater private R&D investments.

Green paper released on the 9th of February 2011.

Youth on the Move Initiative¹¹

The Communication is intended to set out a strategy to:

- integrate EU and national mobility, University and researchers programmes;
- modernise higher education;
- promote entrepreneurship through the mobility of young professionals; and
- promote the recognition of informal learning.

Four specific objectives can be identified which will, in turn, be supported by a number of initiatives¹²:

- Promote the performance and attractiveness of Europe's higher education, in particular, by harnessing and enhancing the EU's mobility programmes, such as, Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus, Tempus and Marie Curie in order to further develop the knowledge economy. A key target is to raise the share of the young adult population who hold a university degree - to 40% of the 30-34 age cohort, by 2020. The aim is to make university studies more relevant, more attractive and more open towards the rest of the world, including by fostering their internationalisation and student/staff mobility;

¹¹ Ibid

¹² European Commission Impact Assessment Roadmap - Youth on the Move
http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/planned_ia/docs/12_eac_youth_on_the_move_communication_en.pdf (first accessed 6th September 2010)

- Contribute to building a strong basis for modern lifelong learning systems which supports the development of high quality and increased participation in higher education. This includes investing in high quality schools, high performing vocational training systems and flexible access for adults to training and up-skilling opportunities including supporting more learning mobility opportunities;
- Encourage the transnational mobility of young people for learning, employability, social and personal development. The aim is that by 2020 all young people in Europe should have the possibility to spend a part of their educational pathway in another Member State; and
- Extend and broaden learning opportunities to young people as a whole, stimulate their engagement in society, and improve their employment situation, among other things, by launching a youth employment framework outlining policies aimed at reducing youth unemployment rates.

Adopted on the 15th of September 2010.

Communication on Youth Unemployment¹³

This Communication looks at ways of strengthening policy to overcome the impact of the crisis on young people. The initiative is part of the flagship initiative "Youth on the Move" in the Europe 2020 strategy adopted by the Commission on 3 March 2010.

It will explore how to ease transitions from education and training to work and will also address how to ensure a better link between policy priorities and EU funds, especially the European Social Fund.

The Communication will announce a set of new initiatives including the promotion of youth geographical mobility (EURES), a mobilisation of the business sector to recruit youth, and announce increased direct support to innovative projects through PROGRESS, the Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action Programmes.

The main policy objective of this initiative is to consolidate the EU policy orientations for youth employment responding to the challenges outlined above and seek to strengthen Member States commitment to action. This may include that the Council endorses conclusions for youth employment policies. Such a commonly agreed policy framework would be a strong tool for filtering down policy orientations to the ground level where concrete action takes place, thus supporting the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy. Regional and local bodies (administration, public employment services, chambers, education and training establishments, youth services) are those dealing directly with young people and often decide on the use of available budgets.

In addition, the initiative would provide the ground for further specific initiatives to:

¹³ European Commission Impact Assessment 2010 Roadmaps
http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/planned_ia/roadmaps_2010_en.htm (first accessed 6th September 2010)

- increase vocational training through more apprenticeship schemes;
- foster high quality learning experiences at workplace after graduation ("traineeships") including in another Member State;
- promote the geographical mobility of young workers; and
- stimulate employers' recruitment of young people.

Agenda for New Skills and Jobs¹⁴

The Agenda focuses on ways in which to develop new skills and jobs across the EU. Areas to be developed include:

- raise activity rates;
- facilitate intra-EU labour mobility;
- better match skills and labour supply with demand;
- strengthen the capacity of social partners;
- strengthen cooperation in education and training; and
- ensuring that competences are acquired and recognised throughout general, vocational, higher and adult education.

The Communication will briefly report on the achievements made since the adoption of the first New Skills for New Jobs (NSNJ) Communication (December 2008), but mainly outlining future activities and the role of NSNJ within EUROPE 2020. This forward-looking aspect will be partly based on the recommendations of an independent expert group report released on 4 February 2010 and debates during the Spanish Presidency Conference on NSNJ (Barcelona, 8-9 April). This would be alongside work on input for the G-20 meeting in April on new training strategies and any follow-up. The work on "competences" (cf. the Council conclusions) will support the NSNJ agenda. The general objectives of future activities within NSNJ are:

- make the case for skills as an integrated agenda within EUROPE 2020;
- empowering people through the acquisition of the right mix of new skills and lifelong learning (LLL);
- anticipate future skills challenges to enable our current and future workforce to adapt to new conditions and potential career shifts;
- match skills and jobs, bridge the gap between education/training and work; and
- open up to talent.

Launched on the 23rd of November 2010.

¹⁴ Ibid

Revision of the Working Time Directive

The Directive was developed to come forward with new proposals to adapt legislation to the needs of workers, businesses, public services and consumers of the 21st Century¹⁵.

Its main objective is:

To ensure that EU working time regulation achieves effectively its objective under Art 153 TFEU (improving protection of workers' health and safety and of their working conditions) in a way which meets the current and prospective needs of workers, businesses and consumers in the EU in the 21st century.

Carried over to CWP 2011.

¹⁵ European Commission Impact Assessment Roadmap – Review of the Working Time Directive
http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/planned_ia/docs/21_empl_revision_working_time_directive_en.pdf (first accessed 6th September 2010)

Appendix 2

Potential Strategic and Policy Initiatives 2010 and Beyond¹⁶

Proposal of the Commission for a Council Recommendation on Early School Leaving

Early school leaving is one of the key targets under the Europe 2020 strategy. The recommendation would provide Member States with a 'policy toolbox' which could be used to tackle the issue and accelerate the rate of improvement in the EU.

Proposal for an integrated Youth on the Move programme 2014 – 2020 (phase II)

In line with the Youth on the Move initiative, the programme will draw together the existing programmes 'lifelong learning' and 'Youth in Action' as well as external actions to create and integrate programme support for the objectives of Youth on the Move.

Commission Proposal for a European Parliament and Council decision on the Strategic Innovation agenda of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and on the amendment to the EIT Regulation

As requested under the EIT regulation, the strategic innovation agenda will make proposals for further governance, operations and resources for the 7-year period ahead.

Communication on a new impetus for European Vocational Education and Training (VET) Cooperation: 2010-2020

The Communication will propose a set of orientations to support the modernisation of Vocational Education and Training (VET) policies. It is an input to the Bruges Ministerial meeting planned for late 2010.

Proposal for a Recommendation of the Council on Promoting Learning Mobility of Young People

Part of the Youth on the Move initiative, the Recommendation will propose actions by the Member States to increase opportunities for learning mobility and to tackle barriers to mobility.

Communication on the initiative for new European Competences

The Communication seeks to develop the key competences approach in the fields of vocational training, adult learning and higher education, building on the 2006 Key Competences Recommendation and will include a proposal for a European Skills Passport.

¹⁶ EU Commission , Commission Work Programme 2010 - Annexe to the Communication from the Commission to European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions

Commission Communication: Proposal for benchmarks on mobility and employability

The Commission has been required to make proposals for new European benchmarks in the fields of mobility and employability relating to how well different parts and levels of education and training prepare people for the labour market.

Draft 2012 Joint Progress Report of the Council and the Commission on the progress made under the 2009-11 priorities of ET 2020

Report on the implementation of the Education and Training Open Method of Coordination (OMC) during 2009-11 as foreseen in the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training and update of priorities to cover the subsequent period.

Communication on the Modernisation of Higher Education

The purpose of this Communication is to review and propose new objectives for the future of this policy agenda. This may include possible proposals for transparency and ranking systems for higher education institutions.

Proposal on the implementation of the Posted Workers' Directive

The initiative will aim to improve the implementation of the Posting of Workers' Directive. The proposal will clarify the legal obligations for national authorities, businesses and workers on the Directive's implementation and ensure the same rules are universally applicable. Any new legal instrument would improve the provision of information for firms and workers. It would improve cooperation between national authorities, ensure effective enforcement through sanctions, remedial action and prevent abuse.

Legislative Proposal on the European Social Fund

The Regulation will have to be adapted in line with EU priorities for the programming period 2014-2020.

Proposal to amend several labour law EC Directives with a view to including seafaring workers or vessels within their scope

The Proposal aims to provide seafarers with the same level of employment rights as onshore workers. A number of Directives in the field of labour law currently exclude seafarers from their scope. The amendments, which should cover several Directives, will either include seafarers in their scope or provide for special treatment of seafarers so as to ensure an equivalent level of protection, while taking into account the special circumstances and the overall economic environment for this industry.

Proposals for a Regulation on the EGF 2013-2020

In 2011, the Commission will carry out a mid-term evaluation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF - exists to support workers who lose their jobs as a result of changing global trade patterns so that they can find another job as quickly as possible) in particular concerning the effectiveness and sustainability of results. This will provide a solid basis for

proposing improvements to the preparation, and types, of actions the EGF can co-finance and consider how delivery can be improved.

Proposal for a Decision on the Progress Programme 2013 – 2020

PROGRESS is the EU's employment and social solidarity programme, which started in 2007. It was established to support financially the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in employment, social affairs and equal opportunities, as set out in the Social Agenda. It also contributes to the achievement of the EU 'Lisbon' Growth and Jobs Strategy.

Proposals on Reconciliation Regarding Parental Leave

Following the Council's agreement on the revision of Directives 96/34/EC on parental leave, which also covers adoption leave and taking into consideration the progress and outcome of the on-going negotiations on the revision of Directive 92/85/EC, the Commission will take further steps to improve the legal and policy framework on reconciliation. To this end, a cost-benefit study will be carried out in 2010 with regard to a possible initiative on paternity leave.