



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Research and Information Service Briefing Paper

Paper 19/14

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NIAR 905-13

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European Commission Legislative & Non Legislative Proposals Q1 2014

Research and Information Service

Table 1: European Commission Legislative Proposals 2014 Q1

NIAR 905-2013

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)
Labour mobility package	Review of the roadmaps for these initiatives did not find any expected dates of adoption in 2014, however, in the 2013 Work Programme the communication on highly mobile workers had an expected adoption date of April 2011 and the coordination of social security systems had an expected adoption date of 4th Quarter 2013.	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 and Non-legislative	The initiative will facilitate the free movement of persons within the EU by means of better coordination of social security schemes, thus making citizens' rights more effective and contributing to growth and jobs. The package will present recent achievements and include the revision of Regulation 883/2004 and Regulation 987/2009 on social security coordination as well as the initiative on highly mobile workers.	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.
Recast* and merger of three Directives in the area of information and consultation of workers.	No date provided	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)	Legislative (Recast)	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.

* 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 Q1

NIAR 905-2013

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)
State Aid Modernisation in Key Sectors	No date provided	Consultations are currently ongoing.	Non-legislative (Guidelines)	The package completes state aid modernisation in key sectors, including an assessment of the application of state aid guidelines to airports and airlines, the revision of the environmental aid guidelines, the guidelines on Research, Development and Innovation and the guidelines on rescue and restructuring aid, as well as new guidelines for state aid for agriculture and forestry.	State aid has been and will likely continue to be an important part of NI's Economic Strategy, including the attraction of FDI and job creation. As such, changes to the system may have implications for the NI economy. The guidelines are intended to improve the control of state aid so public support stimulates innovation and development.	Low - Medium. State aid is an important area for NI funding and the revision of RDI guidelines may impact on NI's HEI sector access to these funds.	This process is currently ongoing with the consultation on the draft framework for state aid for research, development and innovation due to end on the 17 February 2014. The Committee may wish to ask the Department what input it has had in this 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.
Communication on job creation in the 'green economy'	No date provided	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.	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.
Tackling the gender pay gap (Previously referred to in the Q3 CWP 2013 briefing as: Commission Recommendation on strengthening the principle of equal pay between man and women through transparency)	No date provided, however, under its previous title a date of adoption of 4th Semester 2013 was provided.	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.	Recommendation	This initiative would promote and facilitate effective application of the principle of equal pay in practice and assist Member States in finding the right approaches to reduce the persisting gender pay gap.	The gender pay gap is a persistent issue across the EU (including NI). In Northern Ireland 70.6% of men are in employment in comparison to 62% of women with a median weekly pay gap of £38.9 (or 8.1%). Northern Ireland has a number of pieces of legislation in place to ensure the equal treatment of women and men within the workplace and has a Gender Equality Strategy (GES) which runs from 2006-2016.	High - Tackling the issue would have benefit for individuals, communities and the Northern Ireland economy.	This appears to be still in development. The Committee may wish to ask the Department if it is aware of any input it may have had or any actions taken by the EU Commission in regards to it.	No identified issues at this stage. However this may be subject to change.	Social Cohesion: Enhance the region's profile as a region with expertise in innovative practices in the area of social cohesion relating to areas of delivering social change

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Research and innovation as new sources of growth	No date provided	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.