



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Research and Information Service Briefing Paper

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NIAR 89-15

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European Commission Legislative & Non Legislative Proposals 2015 Q1

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Table 1: European Commission Legislative Proposals 2015 Q1

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 (2014/15 priorities)
Promoting integration and employability in the Labour Market.	Unknown.	A proposal on increasing pre-financing amount paid to operational programmes supported by the Youth Employment Initiative was published on the 4 February 2015 (COM(2015) 46). No information has been found regarding the other proposals including a search of Prelex and the Register of Commission Documents which suggests that work is still underway.	Legislative and non-legislative	A package of measures to support Member States in getting people, especially the longer term unemployed and younger people, into work and developing a skilled workforce. This will include measures to follow up on the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative, a proposal for a Council Recommendation on integration of the long-term unemployed, as well as measures to promote skills development.	The Initiative identifies a number of proposals, including: The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), Council Recommendation on integration of the long-term unemployed and Measures to promote skills development. In the Northern Ireland context, the package could contribute to Programme for Government priorities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority 1: Growing a sustainable economy and investing in the future; and • Priority 2: Creating opportunities, tackling disadvantage and improving health and wellbeing. It should be noted that the support provided under the YEI is not applicable to NI as its youth unemployment rate is below 25%.	Medium - however, this may be subject to change as a result of the lack of information currently available on the proposal.	The proposal appears to still be at an early stage of the development. The Committee may wish to ask the Department for Employment and Learning if it has any input into the development of the proposal to date. The UK Government has stated in regards the proposal that: <i>it is for individual Member States "to decide on their own policy direction to meet individual countries' skills needs"</i> .	Not at this time.	R9: Enhance the skills profile of Northern Ireland's current and future workforce through EU placements.
Labour Mobility Package.	Unknown.	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. The UK Government has stated that it will be consulting on the Posted Workers Enforcement Directive in 2015.	Legislative and non-legislative	The package aims at supporting labour mobility and tackling abuse by means of better coordination of social security systems, the targeted review of the Posting of Workers Directive and an enhanced EURES.	Involvement in networks such as EURES are part of the NI Executives overarching European Priorities – a stated priority in the 2014-2015 EU priorities document is to: <i>Raise the region's positive profile by transferring knowledge and learning through participation in formal and informal European networks and partnerships.</i> In addition, as the only UK region to share a land border with another EU State the Posting of Workers Directive may have some additional impact in NI. The Committee may wish to ask the Department what actions it has taken in regards this and the other proposals which have been identified as part of the Initiative.	Medium - however, this may be subject to change as a result of the lack of information currently available on the proposal.	The proposal appears to still be at an early stage of the development. The Committee may wish to ask the Department for Employment and Learning if it has any input into the development of the proposal to date.	Not at this time.	R2: Raise the region's positive profile by transferring knowledge and learning through participation in formal and informal European networks and partnerships. R8: Implement the European Employment Service reform programme in conjunction with the European Commission and the Department for Work and Pensions.

Table 2: European Commission Non-Legislative Proposals 2015 Q1

NIAR 89-2015

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 (2014/15 priorities)
Mid-term review of the Europe 2020 strategy.	Unknown - however, a press release dated the 5 May 2014 states that proposals for the review are expected in early 2015.	In May 2014, a public consultation feeding into the mid-term review of the Europe 2020 strategy was launched. The Consultation closed on the 31 October 2014.	Review	Improved and updated Europe 2020 strategy, drawing lessons from the first four years of the strategy and ensuring it acts as an effective post-crisis strategy for growth and jobs in Europe.	In the Northern Ireland Executives European Priorities for 2014-15 it is stated that: <i>The strategic framework to help shape and focus the Executive's European engagement is set with reference to the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and innovative economic growth and the European Commission's Legislative and Work Programme 2014.</i>	Medium - as Europe 2020 forms a core part of the NI Executive's European Strategy any updates to it may impact on policy decisions made in NI.	The proposal appears to still be at an early stage of the development. The Committee may wish to ask the Department for Employment and Learning if it has any input into the development of the proposal to date or on the consultation.	Not at this time.	C1: Provide timely and accurate advice to Ministers and the Assembly on European policy and funding programmes.
Trade and Investment strategy for Jobs and Growth	Unknown	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.	Review	This initiative involves a comprehensive review of the EU's trade policy strategy, and in particular its contribution to jobs, growth and investment. The review will cover all aspects of trade policy, including bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral negotiations as well as autonomous measures. It will include policy orientations in all these areas for the next five years.	Trade is a major part of the NI economy, with the EU a major trade partners. The focus of the review is on the EU's trade policy strategy, as such this falls more under DETI. However, it could have a substantial impact on employment and as such the priority may shift dependent on the findings of the review. The UK plans to influence it "in order to: address complex issues including investor protection and policy space for public services; consider the strategic priority territories and sectors that promote UK trade and the modernisation of the trade defence mechanism."	Low to Medium (may be subject to change dependent on the findings of the review).	The proposal appears to still be at an early stage of the development. The Committee may wish to ask the Department for Employment and Learning if it has any input into the development of the proposal to date.	Not at this time.	C1: Provide timely and accurate advice to Ministers and the Assembly on European policy and funding programmes.

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 (2014/15 priorities)
European Agenda on Migration	Unknown	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.	Review	The European Agenda on Migration is intended to develop a new approach on legal migration to make the EU an attractive destination for talents and skills, as well as to improve the management of migration by intensifying cooperation with third countries, fostering burden sharing and solidarity and fighting against regular migration and smuggling. The agenda includes a review of the Blue Card Directive, the EU-wide work permit for highly skilled workers.	Economic growth within a region can be supported by inward migration, with highly skilled workers from other countries adding their expertise to the development of industries, technology and innovation. The EU Agenda on Migration could be beneficial to the economic development of NI in the future although further integration measures may be need to support such transitions. It should be noted tha the UK government has stated: <i>The Government believes that the regulation of labour migration from outside the EU should be a matter for Member States to determine on the basis of national assessments of economic need, and the UK has not opted into the existing Directive.</i>	Low to Medium (may be subject to change dependent on the findings of the review).	Migration is a non-devolved matter and as such Northern Ireland will have a limited role in developing a stance in regards this policy.	Not at this time.	C1: Provide timely and accurate advice to Ministers and the Assembly on European policy and funding programmes.

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Table 3: European Commission Legislative Proposals - REFITs 2015 Q1 NIAR 89-2015

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 (2014/15 priorities)
Recast and Merger of three Directives in the area of Information and Consultation of Workers.	In Quarter 3 2014 this was expected to be adopted in September 2014. Current date unknown.	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).	Recast and Merger	This is the recast and merger of three Directives following a fitness check (a check to ensure Regulations remain fit for purpose) published in July 2013 in order to address some of the issues raised by a Commission Staff Working Document (and improve the operation of the Directives). The three Directives are: • Directive 98/59/EC on collective redundancies; • Directive 2001/23/EC on transfers of undertakings; and • Directive 2002/14/EC establishing a general framework relating to information and consultation of workers in the EC.	The three Directives being considered for recast and merger may have implications for employment law and business practice in Northern Ireland and across the EU. However, the extent of these implications will not be known until further information is published on the scope of the consultation. 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 an 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.	C1: Provide timely and accurate advice to Ministers and the Assembly on European policy and funding programmes.
Part-Time Work and Fixed Term Work	Results of the evaluation are expected in 2015	Evaluation yet to be carried out.	Evaluation	Evaluation of Directive 97/81/EC of 15 December 1997 concerning the Framework Agreement on part-time work concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC. Framework Agreement between Europe's employers and trade unions sets out to eliminate unjustified discrimination against part-time workers and improve the quality of part-time work. Directive 1999/70/EC of 28 June 1999 concerning the framework agreement on fixed-term work concluded by ETUC, UNICE and CEEP. The Directive establishes minimum requirements relating to fixed-term work, in order to ensure equal treatment of workers and to prevent abuse arising from the use of successive employment contracts or relationships of this type	As the evaluation concerns the framework agreements on part time and fixed term work its conclusions may impact on Northern Ireland's workforce. However, as the evaluation has yet to be completed it is not yet known what form this may take.	Yet to undergo evaluation and as such there is as yet no information on what scope the REFIT may have - as such it is not possible to assign a prioritisation.	The Communication appears to be still in development.	No identified issues at this stage. However this may be subject to change.	C1: Provide timely and accurate advice to Ministers and the Assembly on European policy and funding programmes.
Information Obligations	Evaluation expected to start in 2015 and is due to end in 2016.	Evaluation yet to be carried out.	Evaluation	Evaluation of Directive 91/533/EC on an employer's obligation to inform employees of the conditions applicable to the contract or employment relationship. The aim of this Directive is to provide employees with improved protection to avoid uncertainty and insecurity about the terms of the employment relationship and to create greater transparency on the labour market.	The Directive sets out protection for employees in the employment relationship and as such any changes to it may have an impact on workers and employers across Europe. However, as the evaluation has yet to be completed it is not yet known what impact the study could have in NI.	Yet to undergo evaluation and as such there is as yet no information on what scope the REFIT may have - as such it is not possible to assign a prioritisation.	The Communication appears to be still in development.	No identified issues at this stage. However this may be subject to change.	C1: Provide timely and accurate advice to Ministers and the Assembly on European policy and funding programmes.

It should be noted that in its response to the EU Commission Work Programme 2015 regarding REFIT actions, the UK Government stated that: *in relation to a number of proposals, the Government will be unable to fully assess the impact of the proposed actions on the UK.*

Source: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmeuleg/219-xxx/21904.htm>