

EUROPEAN COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2016 – COMMITTEE PRIORITIES

Committee: **Committee for Social Development**

Background

Committee noted the OFMdFM paper at its meeting of 7 January and agreed to consider a response at its meeting of 21 January.

Agreed Priorities from the 2016 European Commission Work Programme

Priority

Integration of long-term unemployed

Summary of proposal

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market. The proposal for a Council recommendation presented today foresees that all jobseekers who have been jobless for more than 12 months receive an individual assessment and that they receive a job integration agreement, offering them a concrete and personalised plan back to work before reaching 18 months of unemployment.

Northern Ireland has a large percentage of long-term unemployed. In September 2015 NI had a long-term unemployment rate of 58%, an increase of 6.1 percentage points over the previous year. As such interventions which support NI in tackling this issue will be of benefit.

Planned committee action

To recommend to the Committee for the Communities that this issue is scrutinised in the next mandate given that the Department of Employment & Learning's (DEL) Employment Service and Economic Inactivity Strategy will transfer to the Department for Communities.

EU Urban Agenda

The Urban Innovative Actions Programme was launched at the Cities Forum in Brussels on 2 June by Walter Deffaa (Director General, DG REGIO).

The fund has been created to test new approaches to the challenges faced by cities (through pilot projects). The aim is to generate knowledge of what works in addressing urban problems so as to upscale solutions across the EU.

The total budget is €371m over the period 2015-2020. Projects will be selected through calls for proposals with a maximum award of €5m per project and a co-financing rate of maximum 80%. Projects are expected to be for a duration of 3 years maximum.

The topics of the calls will be defined annually by the Commission. The management of Urban Innovative Actions is delegated to the Nord-Pas de Calais Region in France.

Planned Committee Action

To recommend to the Committee for Communities that it take quarterly updates from the Department on its role in implementing the EU Urban Agenda and particularly on the support it lends to stakeholders to access European funding streams such as the Urban Innovative Actions Programme.