

# Chronology 2011

## Key events in European social policy

Cécile Barbier

January

**1<sup>st</sup> January:** Estonia becomes the 17<sup>th</sup> Member State of the Eurozone.

**5 January:** the EU ratifies UN Convention on disability rights, IP/11/4 (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/4&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

**7 January:** the Commission launches public consultation on the Professional Qualifications Directive (Directive 2005/36) and in this context seeks to revive the idea of a European Professional Card, IP/11/14 (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/14&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

**11 January:** in a letter to Commissioner Olli Rehn (Economic and Monetary Affairs), John Monks, General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation, voices his concern about the implementation of the EU and IMF bailout plans, in the wake of reports from the Greek and Irish trade unions ([http://www.etuc.org/IMG/pdf/110111\\_Olli\\_Rehn.pdf](http://www.etuc.org/IMG/pdf/110111_Olli_Rehn.pdf)).

**12 January:** the Commission prepares for the first European semester and sets the annual priorities for growth in Europe ('Annual Growth Survey') COM (2011) 11 and its 3 annexes.

**14 January:** the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) is critical of the Commission's 'Annual Growth Survey' and calls for an integrated approach to social cohesion.

**17 and 18 January:** at the initiative of the Hungarian Presidency, the Ministers of Employment and Social Affairs hold an informal meeting in Gödöllő (Hungary).

**18 January:** in response to John Monks' letter to Commissioner Olli Rehn (Economic and Monetary Affairs), the Director General of BusinessEurope, Philippe de Buck, expresses his total disagreement with the substance and tone of that communication.

**21 January:** according to a ruling (app. no. 30696/09) handed down by the European Court of Human Rights, the Belgian authorities should not have deported an asylum seeker to Greece. Thus the Court is calling into question the basis of Community regulation Dublin II on asylum rights.

**24 January:** after Germany (19 January), Sweden and the United Kingdom, Finland and Denmark announce that they are to think about ways of suspending the return of asylum seekers from their countries to Greece, thereby giving more feedback to the condemnation of Belgium and Greece by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).

**25 January:** the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) placed its inaugural five-year bonds for an amount of €5 billion, with a deadline of 2016.

**26 January:** the European Commission launches a flagship initiative for sustainable growth, aimed at ensuring smarter use of rare resources and delivering a more sustainable use of natural resources and leading towards resource-efficient, low-carbon growth in Europe, IP/11/63 (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/63&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

**26 January:** the European Commission deems incompatible with EU rules on State aid the French plan for tax exemption or relief for insurers on the arranging of supplementary health insurance contracts described as 'inclusive and responsible'.

**28 January:** a network of trade unions (EPSU), social organisations (Solidar) and free trade bodies (EFTA) is critical of the explanatory guidelines put forward by the European Commission on taking social considerations into account when awarding public contracts.

**31 January:** the Commission launches an action plan to reduce early school leaving, IP/11/109  
(<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/109&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

In **January 2011**, the unemployment rate is 9.9% in the Eurozone and 9.5% in the EU27, STAT/11/31  
(<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=STAT/11/31&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

## February

**1<sup>st</sup> February:** the European Commission launches high-level expert group on literacy, IP/11/115  
(<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/115&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

**2 February:** in the Eurozone, the unemployment rate corrected for seasonal variations settled at 10.0% in December 2010, stable as compared with November.

**2 February:** the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) publishes its conclusions on discrimination.

**4 February:** Berlin and Paris propose a 'competitiveness pact' (see 11 March).

**4 February:** in response to the idea of a competitiveness pact, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) states that it cannot tolerate competitiveness being used as yet another alibi to intervene in collective bargaining systems across Europe  
(<http://www.etuc.org/a/8256>).

**8 February:** the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, speaks out against the detention of unaccompanied minors residing illegally in Europe.

**14 February:** after the opinion of the EP on 15 December 2010, the Council adopts the 'Citizens' Initiative' Regulation. From 1 April 2014 onwards, it will enable EU citizens to ask that legislative proposals be put forward on a precise issue. Regulation 211/2011, OJ L 65 of 11 March.

**15 February:** according to the Court of Justice, 'During the transition period provided for in the Act on the accession conditions of the new Member States, the principle of free movement of services does not prevent the older member states requiring that posted workers from the new member states obtain work permits', Joined Cases C-307/09 to C-309/09 (*Bulletin of the European Union*, No.10315 of 15 February).

**16 February:** the European Parliament asks the Member States to ensure that pension schemes ensure adequate earnings for retired persons and that attention be devoted, as concerns women and older workers, to the issues of portability pension entitlements and inequality.

**21 February:** the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) deeply regrets the stance, taken by Jean-Claude Trichet, the president of the European Central Bank (ECB), saying that 'increasing wages would be the ultimate error to be committed' and setting German style wage moderation as the prime example to be followed by the rest of Europe (<http://www.etuc.org/a/8302>).

**24 February:** the European Commission publishes an assessment of the after-effects of the framework agreement on work-related stress, stating that the agreement has had beneficial outcomes where it has been implemented, SEC (2011) 241.

**28 February:** the Directive on cross-border healthcare is adopted (OJ L 88 of 4 April).

In **February 2011**, the unemployment rate was 9.9% in the Eurozone and 9.5% in the EU27, STAT/11/49 (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=STAT/11/49&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

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## March

**1<sup>st</sup> March:** in a ruling handed down in Case C-236/09, the European Court of Justice ruled that, from 21 December 2012, insurers cannot use gender as a factor in product pricing. So future calculations of life assurance and annuity policies will have to take gender into account.

**3 March:** in an analysis of the first phase of the crisis, the Industrial Relations in Europe 2010 report examines in detail the crisis-response agreements reached in Member States and sectors to confront the crisis, IP/11/251

(<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/251&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

**5 March:** the first European Equal Pay Day emphasises a statistic: women currently earn on average 17.5% less than men in the EU, IP/11/255

(<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/255&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

**5 March:** Paris suspends the return of asylum seekers to Greece.

**7 March:** the EPSCO Council adopts the Joint Employment Report, according to which 'Fiscal consolidation will also require a better targeting of social expenditures' (Doc. 7396/11).

**8 March:** the European Parliament, adopting a resolution on innovative financing, comes out in favour of establishing a Financial Transaction Tax (FTT) at worldwide and European level.

**8 March:** on the occasion of International Women's Day, a survey by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) highlights how the crisis is affecting female workers (<http://www.etuc.org/a/8426>).

**8 March:** the Commission sets out a Roadmap for building a competitive low-carbon Europe by 2050. The Commission does not make the 20% reduction target in the EU mandatory, IP/11/272

(<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/272&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

**9 March:** euro-demonstration in Budapest, on the occasion of the informal Economic and Financial Affairs Council (Ecofin) meeting under the Hungarian presidency.

**9 March:** the European Parliament adopts a resolution calling for action to eliminate the exclusion of and discrimination against Roma and promoting a strategy on their integration.

**10 March:** to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of International Women's Day on 8 March, Parliament adopts three resolutions: one on gender inequality, another on female poverty and the third on health inequalities.

**11 March:** the Pact for the Euro, which 'establishes stronger economic policy coordination for competitiveness and convergence (initially known as the Competitiveness Pact), is endorsed by the Eurozone Heads of State and Government.

**15 March:** the Ecofin Council reaches a policy agreement of principle on the package of six legislative texts, known as the *Six Pack* in European jargon, strengthening EU economic governance (the Stability and Growth Pact), especially in the Eurozone countries.

**16 March:** the Commissioner for Taxation, Algirdas Šemeta, puts forward the Commission's proposal on the establishment of a common taxation system for businesses operating in the EU. This plan is roundly rejected by Ireland, which sees it as a step towards harmonising tax rates, IP/11/319, COM (2011) 121  
(<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/319&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

**16 March:** the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) is calling to ensure that the negotiations over the European Private Company Statute (SPE) will lead to effective worker participation rights (<http://www.etuc.org/a/8484>).

**21 March:** the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) announces the publication of a joint statement on European non-discrimination law, on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

**23 and 24 March:** the European Council adopts the Euro Plus Pact, as well as the limited revision of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, in order to insert the conditions whereby the stability mechanism that will replace the European Financial Stability Fund (EFSF) and the European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism (EFSM).

**23 March:** returning to the decision of the late President Lech Kaczynski, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk announces his government's intention to ratify the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

**23 March:** the European Commission plans to reinforce citizens' rights to consular protection and assistance in third countries, enabling them to ask for assistance from any EU consulate or embassy, IP/11/355

(<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/355&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>).

**23 March:** the European Commission adopts a Staff Working Paper to launch a debate on reviewing State Aid rules on Services of General Economic Interest (SGEI), SEC (2011) 397.

**23 March:** in Portugal, the parliamentary opposition rejects the austerity programme, provoking the resignation of the Socialist Prime Minister, José Socrates.

**24 March:** an ETUC Day of European Action in Brussels, on the occasion of the European Summit of 24 and 25 March, for the European union movement to say 'no' to the proposed 'European economic governance' (<http://www.etuc.org/a/8505>).

**24 March:** the European Parliament gives its backing to the proposed 'single permit' directive which will enable workers from third countries to lodge a single application for work and residence purposes.

**28 March:** in response to the consultation of the social partners on the revision of the Working Time Directive (WTD), the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), disappointed with the European Commission's proposals, says it is ready to start negotiations with the social partners on working time (<http://www.etuc.org/a/8542>).

**28 March:** the Commission presents a 'Transport 2050 roadmap': to increase mobility and reduce emissions. The aim is to create a Single European Transport Area with more competition and a fully integrated transport network which links the different modes and allows for a profound shift in transport patterns for passengers and freight, IP/11/372, COM (2011) 144

(<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/372&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>).

**29 March:** according to the European Statistical Office, Eurostat, the number of asylum seekers registered in the EU27 remained stable in 2010. STAT/11/47

(<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=STAT/11/47&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>).

**31 March:** a European Commission report takes stock of implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. While referring to a number of misunderstandings, the report seeks 'to help better inform the public as to when they can rely on the Charter', COM (2011) 160.

In **March 2011**, the unemployment rate was 9.9% in the Eurozone and 9.5% in the EU27, STAT/11/62

(<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=STAT/11/62&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

## April

**1st April:** the European social partners' survey on flexicurity highlights the complexity of this concept, and even the impossibility of extending it to all the European countries.

**3-8 April:** closure of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change in Bangkok (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change – UNFCCC)

([http://unfccc.int/files/press/press\\_releases\\_advisories/application/pdf/pr20110408bkk\\_close.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/press/press_releases_advisories/application/pdf/pr20110408bkk_close.pdf)).

**4 and 5 April:** the informal Council of Health Ministers, meeting in Gödöllő, discusses the need for more European cooperation in the area of healthcare.

**4 April:** the Frontex Management Board endorses the Agency's Fundamental Rights Strategy.

**5 April:** the European Commission adopts a communication calling on the Member States to set national strategies for Roma integration, IP/11/400

(<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/400&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>).

**5 April:** the European Parliament adopts an own-initiative resolution on migration flows caused by instability, calling on the Council in particular to set up an action plan for the resettlement of refugees in Europe.

**7 April:** Portugal requests international financial aid.

**7 April:** the European Central Bank (ECB) raises its main interest rate from 1% to 1.25%. This increase, the first since 2008, could further jeopardise the crisis-hit countries of Greece, Portugal and Ireland.

**9 April:** an informal Ecofin Council meeting held in Gödöllő decides on indicators intended to monitor the macro-economic imbalances in the European Union.

**9 April:** in the margins of the informal Ecofin Council, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), along with its six Hungarian affiliates (LIGA, ASZSF, SZEF, ESZT, MszOSz and MOSz), holds a euro-demonstration in Budapest against austerity and in favour of Social Europe, for fair pay and for employment.

**11 April:** the JHA (Justice and Home Affairs) Council adopts a Directive granting refugees and beneficiaries of international protection in the EU the same resident status as third-country nationals who have been living within Europe for at least 5 years. The European Parliament adopted its own position on 14 December 2010. Ireland, the UK and Denmark are not taking part in the adoption of this Directive. Directive 2011/51, OJ L 132 of 19 May.

**12 April:** the European Commission launches a public consultation aimed at gathering the opinions of parties interested in improving healthcare by applying ICT (eHealth), IP/11/461

(<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/461&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>).

**13 April:** the Commission identifies twelve priority projects for relaunching the Single Market, IP/11/469, COM (2011) 206

(<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/469&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>).

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) welcomes this action plan as the European Commission acknowledges that there are problems with the economic freedoms taking precedence over fundamental social rights (<http://www.etuc.org/a/8585>).

**13 April:** through its ruling handed down in Case T-576/08 the European Court of Justice annulled part of Regulation (EC) No.983/08 on funding the EU's 'Food Distribution Programme for the Most Deprived Persons (MDP)', which was attacked by Germany on the grounds that this programme no longer derived from the Common Agricultural Policy but from social policies which fall under the competences of the Member States.

**15 April:** according to the IMF, the European banks are threatening global financial stability: a 'debt wall' of \$3,600 billion will be payable within two years.

**15 April:** at the end of their first quarterly assessment period, the European Commission, the ECB and the IMF express their satisfaction concerning Dublin's implementation of its economic adjustment programme in return for international financial aid of €67.5 billion.

**17 April:** Finland's parliamentary election was marked by the upsurge of the 'True Finns' party which opposes the European aid plans.

**19 April:** 47 million Europeans are living in extreme poverty. It cannot be denied that one consequence of the recession is an alarming increase in poverty and homelessness throughout Europe.

**29 April:** the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, replies to the joint letter from the French President and the Italian Prime Minister, stating that he is prepared to re-introduce checks at internal EU borders.

In **April 2011**, the unemployment rate was 9.9% in the Eurozone and 9.4% in the EU27, STAT/11/76 (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=STAT/11/76&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

May

**1<sup>st</sup> May:** Germany and Austria open their labour markets to Polish, Czech and Hungarian workers.

**1<sup>st</sup> May:** ten Member States wish to await the end of the transitional period, on 31 December 2013, before fully opening their labour markets to Bulgarians and Romanians.

**3 May:** the EU and the IMF sign an agreement with the Portuguese government of José Socrates for a loan of €78 billion. It is conditional on reforms including a wage freeze for civil servants, income tax rises and privatisation.

**4 May:** the Commission sets out initiatives for an EU approach to the challenges and opportunities of migration, not least in view of the current developments in the Mediterranean, IP/11/532 (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/532&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>), COM (2011) 248.

**10 May:** Europe as a whole must shoulder its responsibilities by being involved in reception work, states Laura Boldrini, spokeswoman of the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), who was in Italy following the arrival of migrants from Libya.

**10 May:** the Commission considers halving, as from 2014, the list of 176 nations currently benefiting from the trade preference scheme granted by the EU to developing countries under its generalised system of preferences (GSP), COM (2011) 241.

**10 May:** the Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs, Olli Rehn, announces that the Commission has accepted the three-year bailout package for Portugal. Concerning Greece, he deems it necessary to await the outcomes of the international visit to Athens before quantifying the additional requirements of Greece.

**11 May:** the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders, Frontex, publishes its 2011 annual Risk Analysis Report on migration flows.

**11 May:** signing by thirteen countries of the new Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

**12 May:** the European Parliament comes out in favour of an International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention supplemented by a Recommendation on decent work for domestic workers.

**14 May:** the Commission asks Denmark for details of its plan to set up permanent customs checks at certain points along its borders with Germany and Sweden so as to combat organised crime and tax fraud.

**16-19 May:** the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) Congress takes place in Athens from 16-19 May. The message of Europe's trade unions is clear: European governance means strengthening – not attacking – its social model. Bernadette Ségol becomes the new ETUC General Secretary.

**17 May:** the Ecofin Council nominates Mario Draghi as successor to Jean-Claude Trichet as president of the European Central Bank. It unanimously approves the three-year bailout plan for Portugal in return for financial aid of €78 billion.

**19 May:** the EPSCO Council adopts conclusions on a European framework for national Roma integration strategies until 2020, and approves the opinion of the Social Protection Committee. It adopts a decision approving guidelines for the employment policies of Member States for 2011.

**24 May:** the Commission presents a communication aimed at establishing long-term 'dialogue on migration, mobility and security' with Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco, COM (2011) 292.

**24 May:** the Commission proposes to review the 'Visa' Regulation 539/2001 by inserting a safeguard clause allowing for rapid, temporary suspension of the visa waiver for a third country on the positive list if its nationals were to misuse this scheme and came to constitute a new source of illegal immigration in the EU, COM (2011) 290.

**24 May:** the Commission presents an annual report for 2010 on the way the Member States have implemented the 2008 Pact on Immigration and Asylum as well as the Stockholm Programme adopted in 2009 and a communication on mobility partnerships with the southern Mediterranean countries, COM (2011) 291 and COM (2011) 292.

**24 May:** on its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the OECD launched the 'Better Life' Index, allowing citizens to compare well-being across 34 countries, based on 11 dimensions (material living conditions and quality of life: housing, income, jobs, community, education, environment, governance, health, life satisfaction, safety, work-life balance), and enabling them to rate their country on the things they feel make for a better life.

**25 May:** the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders, Frontex, expresses reservations about the plans to resurrect internal border checks within the Schengen area, especially given the risk of large-scale immigration from North Africa.

**26 May:** the European Commission, together with the UN Environment Programme, launched two major reports that call for a radical change in the way we use scarce resources, IP/11/646 (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/646&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>).

**30 May:** a report drawn up by NESSE (Network of Experts in Social Sciences of Education and Training) on behalf of the European Commission assesses the relevance of private educational markets and the reasons why they exist (<http://www.nesse.fr/nesse/activites/rapports/activites/rapports/the-challenge-of-shadow-education-1>).

In **May 2011**, the unemployment rate was 9.9% in the Eurozone and 9.3% in the EU27, STAT/11/99 (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=STAT/11/99&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

## June

**1st June:** the European Commission proposes recasting the directives laying down standards for the reception of asylum seekers and on asylum procedures with a view to establishing a harmonised asylum system by the end of 2012, COM (2011) 320.

**5 June:** the Social-Democrat Party (SDP) of Pedro Passos Coelho wins the Portuguese parliamentary election with 40% the votes, easily outstripping the Socialist Party of outgoing Prime Minister José Sócrates (24%). The abstention rate exceeded 41%, a record for such an election since the advent of democracy in 1974.

**6 June:** the EPSCO Council adopts conclusions 'towards modern, responsive and sustainable health systems'.

**7 June:** the European Commission puts forward its country-specific thoughts about the national stability and growth programmes, presented as part of the European semester, COM (2011) 400.

**8 June:** in 2060, the proportion of the population aged 80 and over is likely to be 12% on average in the EU27.

**8 June:** the European Parliament advocates a new financial framework and a 5% rise in the European budget over the period 2014-2020. In addition, it warns against the idea of subjecting Cohesion Fund grants to penalties in the context of macro-economic conditions in association with the Stability and Growth Pact.

**8 June:** the European Parliament adopts a resolution on the external dimension of social policy, the promotion of social and employment standards and corporate social responsibility.

**14 June:** the European Commission publishes a Green Paper on detention conditions in the EU and on strengthening mutual trust in the European judicial area, COM (2011) 327.

**16 June:** first estimate for the first quarter of 2011. In the Eurozone and EU27, employment is stable at +0.1% and +0.3% respectively compared with the first quarter of 2010, STAT/11/86, (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=STAT/11/86&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

**17 June:** George Papandreou fails to gain the opposition's backing for the austerity programme and reshuffles the Greek executive.

**17 June:** the emerging countries do not want a single Social Model. The 100th International Labour Conference is marked by the rise to power of the 'BRICS'.

**17 June:** according to the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), 'The governance of austerity is stifling our economies and keeping unemployment persistently high. Developments in Greece are particularly worrying' (<http://www.etuc.org/a/8802>).

**18 June:** the EU's Ministers of Employment and Social Policy issue guidance on the 'employment' aspects of the country-specific recommendations adopted by the Commission on 7 June. Belgium, Cyprus and Malta enter reservations on these recommendations, and the United Kingdom enters a parliamentary scrutiny reservation.

**21 June:** the European Commission sharply reduces the amount of the EU budget earmarked for the 2012 programme for the supply of food for the most deprived persons living in the EU, IP/11/756 (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/756&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>) and for the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 562/2011 of 10 June 2011, OJ L 152 of 11 June.

**22 June:** the Commission publishes a Green Paper on modernising the professional qualifications directive, COM (2011) 367.

**22 June:** the Council and the European Parliament reach a compromise on recasting the Frontex Agency regulation.

**23 June:** when voting on the legislative package strengthening the Stability and Growth Pact, the MEPs stand by their demand for more decisions to be taken automatically in respect of the preventive side of the Pact.

**24-25 June:** the EU undertakes to help Greece and save the euro. It endorses Mario Draghi, appointed to head the ECB until 2019. The European Council adopts a plan for the integration of Roma.

**29 June:** the European Commission adopts a number of proposals on the next multi-annual work programme (2014-2020), COM (2011) 500.

**29 June:** Council policy agreement on the Commission's proposal to establish a single work and residence permit for third-country nationals.

**30 June:** launch of Finance Watch, a non-governmental organisation seeking to act as a counterweight to the financial lobby in Brussels (<http://www.finance-watch.org>).

**30 June:** completion of accession negotiations between the EU and Croatia.

In **June 2011**, the unemployment rate was 9.9% in the Eurozone and 9.4% in the EU27, STAT/11/114 (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=STAT/11/114&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

## July

**4 July:** the ETUC writes to BusinessEurope saying that it is prepared to negotiate an agreement on reviewing the Working Time Directive.

**5 July:** a European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) publication criticises the exploitation and ill-treatment of illegal migrants employed as domestic staff in the EU27.

**6 July:** the European Parliament adopts a resolution on the financial, economic and social crisis, as well as a resolution on accessible, affordable and high-quality social services.

**7 July:** keeping people of a certain age active, improving their social inclusion and eliminating barriers between generations: these are the topics that should be central to activity in the European Year 2012 for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, according to the European Parliament.

**8 July:** the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) issued a press release welcoming the Guide on Socially Responsible Public Procurement (SRPP) published by the Commission as a tool to better explain how social criteria could be applied to public procurement and help determine responsible purchasing priorities.

**9 July:** almost a year after their launch on 7 July 2010, completion of the technical negotiations between the Council of Europe and the European Union on the EU's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights.

**11 July:** extra funds for education, youth and creativity will boost jobs, says the Commission, especially through a new programme to be allocated €15.2 billion over seven years. The Commission is aiming to nearly double the number of young people, teachers and researchers who get EU grants for study and training abroad, IP/11/857 (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/857&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

**11 July:** the Eurozone Ministers of Finance sign the Treaty setting up the European Stability Mechanism.

**12 July:** the Ecofin Council adopts the country-specific recommendations addressed to the Member States as part of the first European semester. It also adopts for the first time a recommendation on the implementation of the broad guidelines for the economic policies of the Member States whose currency is the euro, OJ C 217 of 23 July 2011.

**14 July:** in 2010, 32.5 million foreign nationals were living in the EU27 Member States: 12.3 million of them were nationals of another EU27 State, while the other 20.2 million were nationals of non-EU27 Member States.

**18 July:** BusinessEurope replies to the ETUC: it agrees to negotiate on reviewing the Working Time Directive, but does not agree to setting up a restricted pre-negotiation group.

**20 July:** the European Commission publishes its European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals, COM (2011) 455.

**21 July:** the Eurozone Heads of State and Government agree on the second bailout plan for Greece and on the extension of the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF).

**22 July:** the Spanish Government introduces work permits for Romanian workers.

**25 July:** the European Commission announces that France and Italy infringed the spirit of Schengen, but not its rules, in April 2011 at the time of their controversy caused by an inflow of Tunisian migrants.

In **July 2011**, the unemployment rate was 10.0% in the Eurozone and 9.5% in the EU27, STAT/11/124

(<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=STAT/11/124&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

## August

**2 August:** there is no bailout plan on the table for assistance to Spain, Italy or Cyprus, three Eurozone countries under growing pressure from the markets and the rating agencies, states the European Commission.

**4 August:** the European Central Bank (ECB) reactivates its programme of purchasing Eurozone public bonds on the markets.

**5 August:** S&P downgrades the rating of the United States to AA+.

**6 August:** the ECB makes fresh supplies of cash available to ailing banks by reviving a measure taken in 2008 after the collapse of Lehman Brothers.

**11 August:** the European Commission approves Spain's request to restrict its labour market in respect of Romanian workers, IP/11/960 (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/960&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

**17 August:** France and Germany wish to introduce economic governance and rely on austerity.

**23 August:** the second bailout plan for Greece is thrown off course by the demands of certain European countries. Finland obtained from Athens a financial guarantee in return for its contribution.

**25 August:** after Ireland, the United Kingdom confirms its participation in the European Commission's proposals on victims' rights, published on 18 May.

In **August 2011**, the unemployment rate was 10.0% in the Eurozone and 9.5% in the EU27, STAT/11/143 (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=STAT/11/143&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

## September

**2 and 6 September:** after the agreement between the PSOE and the PP, Spain's Members of Parliament vote in favour of enshrining a 'golden rule' in the Spanish constitution, with a view to limiting public expenditure. The trade unions and 'indignant protesters' rally against this 'golden rule'.

**7 September:** Germany's Constitutional Court validates the first bailout plan for Greece and the package to safeguard the euro.

**9 September:** France and Germany forward to the European Commission their proposals on establishing a tax on financial transactions.

**10 September:** resignation of the Chief Economist and Member of the Executive Board of the European Central Bank (ECB), the German Jürgen Stark.

**12 September:** the first volume of the Social Europe guide, devoted to the issue of employment, is published by the European Commission.

**15 September:** first estimate for the second quarter of 2011. Eurozone employment is up by 0.3% and EU27 up by 0.2%. It is up +0.4% and +0.3% respectively, compared with the second quarter of 2010, STAT/11/131

(<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=STAT/11/131&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

**16 September:** the Commission publishes its proposed new rules on State aids for services of general economic interest (SGEI), which it is likely to adopt between now and the end of January 2012 after consultations with stakeholders (Member States, local authorities, businesses, consumers).

**20 September:** the European Commission adopts a Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe aiming to convert the European economy into a sustainable economy by 2050, IP/11/1046

(<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/1046&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>), COM (2011) 571.

**20 September:** the European Commission presents a higher education reform strategy in order to achieve the targets laid down by Europe's strategy for jobs and growth, IP/11/1043, COM (2011) 567

(<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/1043&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

**20 September:** in the context of European Year of Volunteering 2011, the Commission's communication on 'EU Policies and Volunteering' calls for the creation of a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps and the development of a 'European Skills Passport', IP/11/1050 (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/1050&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>).

**21 September:** the Socialist and Democrat (S&D) Group Members of the European Parliament set out in a guidance document ten key points 'for a new ambitious social strategy' aimed at improving daily life for European citizens hit by the crisis and to make the single market more social.

**22 September:** within the Council, the Netherlands and Finland veto the decision allowing Romania and Bulgaria to join the Schengen area.

**26 September:** the Commission approves the report, produced by the Eurydice network, analysing the social dimension of higher education in 31 European countries, IP/11/1037 (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/1037&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>).

**28 September:** despite splits, the European Parliament adopts the reform of the Stability and Growth Pact, the *Six Pack* (<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/fr/pressroom/content/20110928IPR27710/html/Nouvelles-mesures-sur-la-gouvernance-%C3%A9conomique-le-Parlement-donne-le-feu-vert>).

**28 September:** the European Commission puts forward its proposed financial transaction tax, IP/11/1085, COM (2011) 594 (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/1085&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

**29 September:** the German Bundestag approves the bill to support the expansion of the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) to €440 billion, as well as greater flexibility in its powers.

**29 September:** the European Parliament approves an enlargement of the scope of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) until 2013 for workers affected by the economic and financial crisis.

In **September 2011**, the unemployment rate was 10.2% in the Eurozone and 9.7% in the EU27, STAT/11/160 (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=STAT/11/160&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

## October

**3 October:** Helle Thorning Schmidt, the new (Social-Democrat) Danish Prime Minister announces that the resumption of regular customs checks at the country's borders is cancelled.

**4 October:** all the irregular-migration indicators were up in the second quarter of 2011, according to a Frontex Agency report ([http://www.frontex.europa.eu/download/Z2Z4L2Zyb250ZXgvZW4vZGVmYXVsdF9ha3R1YWxub3NjaS8xMDYvMjYvMQ/fran\\_q2\\_2011.pdf](http://www.frontex.europa.eu/download/Z2Z4L2Zyb250ZXgvZW4vZGVmYXVsdF9ha3R1YWxub3NjaS8xMDYvMjYvMQ/fran_q2_2011.pdf)).

**6 October:** the European Commission puts forward its proposed review of the Cohesion Policy for the next programming period 2014-2020. One of the most controversial measures is the possibility of suspending aid to regions of countries whose budgetary policy is too lax or fails to comply with the Stability and Growth Pact, IP/11/1159 (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/1159&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

**12 October:** in its Opinion on Serbia's application for EU membership, the European Commission advocates granting Serbia the status of candidate country, COM (2011) 668.

**13 October:** the UK Government announces that it will not opt in to the directives recast by the Commission on 1 June on the Reception Conditions for asylum seekers and the Procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection.

**13 October:** Herman van Rompuy and José Manuel Barroso welcome Slovakia's ratification of the enhanced European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF). This ratification makes the EFSF 'fully operational' and gives the 17 countries concerned a 'stronger and more flexible tool for safeguarding the financial stability of the Eurozone'.

**14 October:** the overall number of asylum seekers rose by 17% in the first half of 2011, the highest figure for eight years, as indicated in a UNHCR report (<http://www.unhcr.org/4e9beaa19.html>).

**15 October:** worldwide demonstrations by the 'indignant protesters'. Protests against the 'world of finance' are held in 951 towns. Rally of the Occupy Wall Street movement.

**17 October:** the Tripartite Social Summit debates the financial crisis and the European States' sovereign debt, on the European Council's agenda for 23 October (initially scheduled for 17 October).

**17-18 October:** so as to achieve the goal of the Europe 2020 Strategy aiming to lift at least 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion, the EU sets up a European Platform Against Poverty, coinciding with the Convention organised by the Polish presidency and the European Commission in Krakow (Poland).

**19 October:** an International Labour Organization (ILO) report entitled 'Global Employment Trends for Youth: 2011 Update', warns against the collective frustration of young people in view of unemployment ([http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---emp\\_elm/---trends/documents/publication/wcms\\_165455.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_elm/---trends/documents/publication/wcms_165455.pdf)).

**23 October:** at the European Council, the Eurozone leaders discuss setting the common retirement age at 67.

**25 October:** in order to encourage a responsible approach to business, the Commission adopts a number of measures aimed at creating a legislative environment to support long-lasting social businesses, IP/11/1238 (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/1238&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>), COM (2011) 681 and COM (2011) 682 .

**27 October:** Eurozone summit: a last-minute deal is struck on a response to the crisis (EFSF endowed on paper with €1,000 billion, a 50% cut in Greece's debt commitments, recapitalisation of European banks).

**31 October:** the Greek Prime Minister announces a referendum on the bailout plan. The likelihood of a default by Greece becomes a major topic of debate.

**31 October:** in its World of Work Report 2011, the ILO states that the world is heading towards a new, intense shortage of jobs and warns of an upsurge of social unrest  
([http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/press-and-media-centre/news/WCMS\\_166395/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/press-and-media-centre/news/WCMS_166395/lang--en/index.htm)).

In **October 2011**, the unemployment rate was 10.3% in the Eurozone and 9.8% in the EU27, STAT/11/176  
(<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=STAT/11/176&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

## November

**1st November:** Mario Draghi replaces Jean-Claude Trichet as President of the European Central Bank.

**2 November:** the topics dominating the G20 Summit (held in Cannes on 3-4 November) should not mask the fact that the unemployment and job insecurity of many workers constitute the most pressing issues to be solved, according to Juan Somavia, Director General of the International Labour Office (ILO)  
(<http://www.g20-g8.com/g8-g20/g20/english/home.9.html>).

**3 and 4 November:** in an urgent meetings on the margins of the G20 summit, Europe's leaders reassert their determination to ensure the stability of the Eurozone, with or without Greece.  
Under pressure from German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Nicolas Sarkozy, the Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou abandons his plan for a referendum on the second European bailout plan.

**3 November:** although structural and youth unemployment are of particular concern within the EU, Commissioner László Andor, responsible for employment, social affairs and inclusion, believes that another 'alarming trend' must be faced: namely the rise in job insecurity, he asserted at a meeting of EFFAT (European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions) (<http://www.effat.eu/public/index.php?lang=2&menu=>).

**8 November:** after the European Parliament (28 September), the Council adopts all six legislative proposals (the *Six Pack*) intended to tighten up economic governance within the EU.

**8 November:** at a time when the national concept of rail is poised to be stripped away by the Commission's proposed reform to the railway package, railway staff held a day of action throughout Europe.

**10 November:** Silvio Berlusconi, Italian Prime Minister, now head of a minority in the House of Deputies, has to step down under pressure from the markets.

**10 November:** the Commission reviews its growth forecasts downwards and calls on France to redouble its efforts.

**11 November:** the Commission publishes a report arguing for the end of transitional measures against the free movement of Bulgarian and Romanian workers, COM (2011) 729.

**14 November:** the Council reaches an agreement whereby the food aid programme for the EU's most deprived persons can be extended by two years, in 2012 and 2013.

**15 November:** the European Commission publishes a Green Paper on the 2003 directive: the right to family reunification of third-country nationals, COM (2011) 735.

**15 November:** the European social partners inform the European Commission that they wish to embark on negotiations as part of the consultations on recasting the Working Time Directive.

**15 November:** formation of a government of experts in Italy, under the authority of the new Prime Minister, Mario Monti.

**16 November:** according to the Frontex Agency, during the first nine months of 2011 the European authorities apprehended almost twice as many irregular migrants as they did in 2010, with sea crossings to Italy and Malta once again being the main access route as a result of the Arab spring and the Libyan conflict.

**17 and 18 November:** the Polish Council presidency and Eurofound (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions) organise a conference on the social repercussions of migration in the host and home countries.

**18 November:** the Commission proposes a 'Global Approach to Migration and Mobility', COM (2011) 743.

**19 November:** the 27 and the European Parliament reach a compromise on a minimum budget for the EU for 2012.

**20 November:** historic defeat of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE).

**21 November:** the Danish chair of the Party of European Socialists (PES), Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, announces his resignation.

**23 November:** the Commission prepares for the 2012 European semester. It puts forward new initiatives for growth, governance (Two Pack) and stability ('Annual Growth Survey'), IP/11/1381 (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/1381&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

**24 November:** the Council approves the directive recasting the conditions that asylum seekers must meet in order to obtain international protection, adopted by the European Parliament on 26 October. Directive 2011/51, OJ L 132 of 19 May.

In **November 2011**, the unemployment rate was 10.3% in the Eurozone and 9.8% in the EU27, STAT/12/5

(<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=STAT/12/5&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

## December

**1<sup>st</sup> and 2 December:** since a qualified majority could not be achieved, the EPSCO Council did not reach a political agreement on the extension of the crisis derogation concerning the European globalisation adjustment fund.

**2 December:** the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) sends a letter to EU Heads of State and Government to express serious concerns about the report from the European Commission on 'Minimizing regulatory burden for SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises)' (<http://www.etuc.org/a/9367>) and COM (2011) 803.

**9 December:** the European Council approves the approaches of the report on 'Minimizing regulatory burden for SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises)', EUCO 139/11.

**9 December:** the Eurozone Heads of State and Government come to an agreement on the content of measures intended to enhance budget discipline in the Eurozone. This agreement is likely to take the form of an international agreement based around Eurozone Member States, open to participation by non-members. The United Kingdom immediately refuses to become involved.

**9 December:** Croatia signs the European Union accession treaty. It will become the 286<sup>th</sup> EU Member State on 1 July 2013. A referendum in the country is scheduled for 22 January 2012.

**15 December:** first estimate for the third quarter of 2011. Employment is down by 0.1% in Eurozone and EU27. It is +0.2% and -0.1% respectively compared with the third quarter of 2010, STAT/11/190 (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=STAT/11/190&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

**15 December:** the Commission publishes the first annual analysis of the trend in employment and in social circumstances in Europe. This replaces the analysis of social developments in Europe and the Europe Employment Report. The recommendations it contains will be taken into account for the European semester and the country-specific recommendations in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

**20 December:** at the end of consultations, the Commission adopts a new package of State aids and public-service compensation for services of general economic interest (SGEI), COM (2011) 896, COM (2011) 897 and COM (2011) 895, IP/11/1579 (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/1579&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>).

**21 December:** the ECB grants a record €489 billion of loans to Europe's banks.

*Chronology drawn up by Cécile Barbier  
with the assistance of Sophie Ost.*