

## **Chronology 2003**

### **Key events in European social policy**

#### **JANUARY**

**14 January:** The social partners publish a joint contribution to the work of the Social Europe Working Group of the **European Convention**. Joint contribution by the social partners' representatives in the Convention Working Group on Social Europe (s/2003/100.05.02/WG social/joint contribution SP, 14 January 2003).

**14 January:** The European Commission adopts the communication from Anna Diamantopoulou on the future of the **European Employment Strategy**. Communication on the future of the European Employment Strategy (EES): "A strategy for full employment and better jobs for all", COM (2003) 6 final of 14 January 2003.

**15 January:** The social partners give their initial response to the Commission's consultation on **stress at work**. ETUC, UNICE-UEAPME and CEEP, Letter to Mrs Odile Quintin (UNICE@News, January 2003, page 11).

**15 January:** A joint declaration is adopted between social partners in the banking sector on **life-long learning**. FBE, EACB, ESBG, UNI-Europa, "Bank Social Partners' Joint Declaration on Lifelong Learning in the Banking Sector".

**20 January:** The social partners adopt a joint declaration on 2003 as the Year of **People with Disabilities**. "Social Partners' Joint Declaration on European Year of People with Disabilities: Promoting equal

opportunities and access to employment for people with disabilities” (ETUC, UNICE-UEAPME, CEEP).

**27 January:** Informal meeting of the **Employment and Social Policy Council**: the ministers mainly discuss the coordination of social protection policies, the European Employment Strategy, and institutionalisation of the Tripartite Social Summit. *Bulletin quotidien Europe* No.8387 of 28 January 2003, page 11 and *Bulletin quotidien Europe* No.8384 of 23 January 2003, page 11.

**30 January:** The Commission publishes its second progress report on **economic and social cohesion**, COM (2003) 34 final of 30 January 2003.

## FEBRUARY

**3 February:** The EU health ministers and the Commission decide to launch a high-level reflection group on the question of **patient mobility** within the EU. *Bulletin quotidien Europe* No.8392 of 4 February 2003, page 10.

**4 February:** The Social Europe Working Group of the **European Convention** presents its final report. European Convention, CONV 516/1/03, REV1, WG XI 9, Final report of Working Group XI on Social Europe.

**6 February:** The Council adopts a resolution on **corporate social responsibility**. Council resolution on corporate social responsibility (2003/C 39/02) (OJ C 39 of 18 February 2003, page 3).

**6 February:** The Commission approves its “Scoreboard on implementing the **social policy agenda**”, COM (2003) 57 final of 6 February 2003.

**7 February:** The social partners of the **sugar industry** sign an important agreement on corporate social responsibility, *Press Release*, 6 February 2003, “European sugar industry first sector to agree on broad-scale CSR minimum standards” ([http://www.effat.org/5/5\\_1/5\\_1\\_4/Files%20EN/Sugar/corpsocialresp2003.htm](http://www.effat.org/5/5_1/5_1_4/Files%20EN/Sugar/corpsocialresp2003.htm)).

**15 February:** The Directive on the protection of workers against **noise** is published in the Official Journal. Directive 2003/10/EC of the

European Parliament and of the Council of 6 February 2003 on the minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to the risks arising from physical agents (noise) (OJ L 42 of 15 February 2003, page 38).

**19 February:** The Commission adopts a communication on Progress in implementing the Joint Assessment Papers (JAP) on **employment policies in acceding countries**, COM (2003) 663 final of 6 November 2003.

**28 February:** The Council recommendation of 18 February 2003 concerning the improvement of the protection of the **health and safety at work** of self-employed workers is published in the Official Journal. OJ L 53 of 28 February 2003, page 45.

## **MARCH**

**4 March:** The European Foundation for the Improvement of Working and Living Conditions publishes a report on “Preventing **violence and harassment** in the workplace”. Di Martino V., Hoel H. and Cooper C.L., *Preventing violence and harassment in the workplace*, European Foundation for the Improvement of Working and Living Conditions, Dublin, (<http://www.eurofound.eu.int>).

**5 March:** The Commission publishes the seventh report on **equal opportunities** for women and men. Annual Report on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the European Union 2002, COM (2003) 98 final of 5 March 2003.

**6 March:** The EU Ministers for Social Affairs and Employment unanimously adopt the decision establishing a **Tripartite Social Summit**. 2492<sup>nd</sup> Council meeting – Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs – Brussels, 6 March 2003 (6678/03, Presse 55).

**6 March:** The Employment and Social Policy Council approves its contribution to the Spring European Council: the Joint Report on adequate and sustainable **pensions** and the Joint Report on **health care** and care for the elderly. 2492<sup>nd</sup> Council meeting – Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs – Brussels, 6 March 2003 (6678/03, Presse 55).

**12 March:** The Executive Committee of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) calls for **work stoppages** throughout Europe at midday on 14 March to call for disarmament in Iraq through peaceful means and not war. *Bulletin quotidien Europe* No.8419 of 13 March 2003, page 6.

**14 March:** The ETF organises an **international day of action** for railway workers in Europe. *Press release:* “Resisting social dumping and calling for safety in the railways in Europe” – the International Railway Workers Action Day, 14 March 2003 ([www.itf.org.uk/etf](http://www.itf.org.uk/etf)).

**14 March:** The Council Decision establishing a **Tripartite Social Summit** is published in the Official Journal. Council Decision of 6 March 2003 establishing a Tripartite Social Summit for Growth and Employment (2003/174/EC) (OJ L 70 of 14 March 2003, page 31).

**14 March:** The social partners adopt their first follow-up report on the framework of actions for the lifelong development of **competencies and qualifications**. ETUC, UNICE/UEAPME, CEEP: “Framework of actions for the lifelong development of competencies and qualifications”, First follow-up report, 14 March 2003.

**18 March:** The programme on **incentive measures in the field of employment** (EIM) is published in the Official Journal. Community incentive measures in the field of employment (EIM) (2003/C 64/22) (OJ C 64 of 18 March 2003, page 26).

**20 March:** First official meeting of the **Tripartite Social Summit** for Growth and Employment. *Bulletin quotidien Europe* No.8425 of 21 March 2003, page 8.

**21 March:** The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) organises in Brussels, alongside the **Spring European Council**, a demonstration to highlight “the urgent need for coordinated initiatives at European level to relaunch the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs”. *Bulletin quotidien Europe* No.8424 of 20 March 2003, page 17.

## APRIL

**8 April:** The Commission presents its proposals for the **broad economic policy guidelines**, for the first time together with the **employment guidelines**. Proposal for a Council Decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States, and Recommendation for a Council recommendation on the implementation of Member States' employment policies, COM (2003) 176 and 177 final of 8 April 2003.

**15 April:** The new Directive on the protection of workers from the risks of **asbestos** is published in the Official Journal. Directive 2003/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 March 2003 amending Council Directive 83/477/EEC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to asbestos at work (OJ L 97 of 15 April 2003, page 48).

**29 April:** The Executive Committee of the ETUC tasks an ETUC delegation with starting up negotiations with the European employers' organisations on a framework agreement on **stress at work**. Press release of 23 April (<http://www.etuc.org/FR/presse/releases/other/Cexecutif.cfm>).

## MAY

**5 May:** The Education Council adopts benchmarks in **education and training**. 2503<sup>rd</sup> Council meeting – Education, Youth and Culture – Brussels, 5 and 6 May 2003 (8430/03, Presse 114).

**5 May:** Publication of the first experts' report on **fundamental rights** in the EU. Network of independent experts in fundamental rights (CFR-CDF), *Report on the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union and its Member States in 2002* ([http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice\\_home/fsj/rights/network/rapport\\_2002\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/fsj/rights/network/rapport_2002_en.pdf)).

**21 May:** The European Commission adopts its Green Paper on **services of general interest**, COM (2003) 270 final of 21 May 2003.

**27 May:** John Monks is elected as the new **ETUC General Secretary** at the ETUC Congress in Prague (<http://www.etuc.org/>).

**28 May:** The Commission adopts a communication to streamline the **OMC processes in the field of social protection**. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Strengthening the social dimension of the Lisbon strategy: Streamlining open coordination in the field of social protection, COM (2003) 261 final of 27 May 2003.

## **JUNE**

**3 June:** Failure of the ministerial discussions on **temporary agency work** during the Employment and Social Policy Council. 2512<sup>th</sup> Council meeting – Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs – Luxembourg, 2 and 3 June 2003 (9688/1/03 REV 1 – Presse 152).

**3 June:** The Commission publishes its communication on the topic “**immigration, integration and employment**”. Communication on immigration, integration and employment, COM (2003) 336 final of 3 June 2003.

**3 June:** Agreement of the Employment and Social Policy Council on the 10 new **employment guidelines**. 2512<sup>th</sup> Council meeting – Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs – Luxembourg, 2 and 3 June 2003 (9688/1/03 REV 1 – Presse 152).

**4 June:** The Commission adopts its mid-term review of the **social policy agenda**, COM (2003) 312 final of 2 June 2003.

**7 June:** The Council resolution on benchmarks in **education and training** is published in the Official Journal. Council Conclusions of 5 May 2003 on reference levels of European average performance in education and training (benchmarks) (2003/C 134/02) (OJ C 134 of 7 June 2003, page 3).

**18 June:** Jürgen Strube becomes the **new President of UNICE**.

**19 June:** The Council of the European Union adopts the Directive on the **periodic training of drivers of road vehicles** for the carriage of

goods or passengers. Directive 2003/59/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 July 2003 on the initial qualification and periodic training of drivers of certain road vehicles for the carriage of goods or passengers (OJ L 226 of 10 September 2003, page 4).

## **JULY**

**2 July:** The European Commission approves its report on the transposition of Council Directive 96/34/EC of 3 June 1996 on the framework agreement on **parental leave** concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC on 14 December 1995. COM (2003) 358 final of 19 June 2003.

**11 July:** Informal meeting of the **Employment and Social Policy Council**.

**15 July:** The Council Resolution on the social integration of **people with disabilities** is published in the Official Journal. Council Resolution of 15 July 2003 on promoting the employment and social integration of people with disabilities (OJ C 175 of 24 July 2003, pp.1-2).

**22 July:** The Council adopts the Commission proposal on the **European Cooperative Society**. Council Regulation (EC) No.1435/2003 of 22 July 2003 on the Statute for a European Cooperative Society (SCE) (OJ L 207 of 18 August 2003, pp.1-24).

**22 July:** The Council formally adopts the 2003 **employment package**. Council Decision of 22 July 2003 on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States (2003/578/EC) (OJ L 197 of 5 August 2003, pp. 13-21) and Council Recommendation of 22 July 2003 on the implementation of Member States' employment policies (OJ L 197 of 5 August 2003, pp.22-30).

**22 July:** The Council adopts the creation of the new **Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work**. COM (2002) 486 final of 4 September 2002; Council Decision of 22 July 2003 setting up an Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work (OJ C 218 of 13 September 2003, pp.1-4).

**24 July:** The European Court of Justice gives its ruling on the Altmark Trans case concerning the **financing of public services**, stipulating that financial support for public services does not constitute State aid under Community law. ECJ, 24 July 2003, *Altmark Trans GmbH, Regierungspräsidium Magdeburg and Nahverkehrsgesellschaft Altmark GmbH*, C-280/00.

## **AUGUST**

**1<sup>st</sup> August:** The **2003-2005 BEPGs** are published in the Official Journal. Council Recommendation of 26 June 2003 on the broad guidelines of the economic policies of the Member States and the Community (for the 2003-2005 period) (2003/555/EC) (OJ L 195 of 1 August 2003, pp.1-54).

**5 August:** The Council Decision on the **2003-2005 EES** guidelines is published in the Official Journal. Council Decision of 22 July 2003 on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States (2003/578/EC) (OJ L 197 of 5 August 2003, pp.13-21).

**5 August:** The Council recommendation on the **Member States' employment policies** is published in the Official Journal. Council Recommendation of 22 July 2003 on the implementation of Member States' employment policies (2003/579/EC) (OJ L 197 of 5 August 2003, pp.22-30).

**18 August:** The Regulation on the Statute for a **European Cooperative Society** and the Directive on the **involvement of employees** are published in the Official Journal. Council Regulation (EC) No.1435/2003 of 22 July 2003 on the Statute for a European Cooperative Society (SCE) and Council Directive 2003/72/EC of 22 July 2003 supplementing the Statute for a European Cooperative Society with regard to the involvement of employees (OJ L 207 of 18 August 2003, pp.1-36).



## SEPTEMBER

**9 September:** The Commission publishes the 2003 report on the **social situation in Europe**. European Commission, *The Social Situation in the European Union 2003*, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.

**10 September:** The Directive on the **training and qualification of drivers of road vehicles** enters into force. Directive 2003/59/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 July 2003 on the initial qualification and periodic training of drivers of certain road vehicles for the carriage of goods or passengers, amending Council Regulation (EEC) No.3820/85 and Council Directive 91/439/EEC and repealing Council Directive 76/914/EEC (OJ L 226 of 10 September 2003, pp.4-17).

**15 September:** The Commission launches the second stage of the consultation of the social partners on the **portability of occupational pension rights**. Commission communication, Second stage consultation of social partners on measures to improve the portability of occupational pension rights, SEC (2003) 916 adopted by the Commission on 12 September 2003.

**16 September:** The social partners react to the Commission's plan concerning the **streamlining of the OMC** in the field of social protection. ETUC, UNICE-UEAPME, CEEP, *Lettre commune streamlining-final-FR*, to Mr Theo Langejan, Chairman of the Social Protection Committee, 16 September 2003 (2003.102.6).

**16 September:** The ETF opposes the **deregulation of ground handling** in airports. ETF press release, "Ground handling: forward total deregulation?". Council Directive 96/67/EC of 15 October 1996 on access to the groundhandling market at Community airports (OJ L 272 of 25 October 1996, pp.36-45).

**17 September:** The ITF protests against the "Ports" Directive and the **liberalisation of port services**, which it includes. *Press release*, 17 September 2003, "Ports protest week ends with late Dutch finale" (<http://www.itf.org.uk/media/releases/170903.html>).

**18 September:** As a follow-up to the UNICE Council of Presidents' decision to authorise UNICE to enter negotiations in view of concluding a voluntary agreement on **work-related stress**, the negotiations begin on 18 September 2003. UNICE@News, September 2003, page 9.

**24 September:** The Commission adopts a recommendation to update the schedule of **occupational diseases**. Commission Recommendation of 19 September 2003 concerning the European schedule of occupational diseases, C(2003)3297 final of 19 September 2003.

**30 September:** Agreement reached in conciliation on the **liberalisation of port services**, against the background of the dockers' demonstrations in several EU ports. Parliament-Council Conciliation Committee (C/03/268 Brussels, 30 September 2003, 12512/03, Presse 268).

## OCTOBER

**3 October:** The Commission publishes a report on **discrimination in the candidate countries**. European Commission, *Equality, Diversity and Enlargement*, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, 2003 ([http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/fundamental\\_rights/pdf/studies/EqualDivEnlarg\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/fundamental_rights/pdf/studies/EqualDivEnlarg_en.pdf)).

**4 October:** The ETUC organises a **social demonstration** in Rome at the start of the IGC to warn against weakening Europe's social dimension.

**9 October:** The Commission publishes the 2003 report on **employment in Europe**. European Commission, *Employment in Europe 2003, Recent Trends and Prospects*, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.

**15 October:** The European Commission gives its interpretation of the conditions for applying Article 7 of the Treaty on the monitoring of respect for **fundamental rights**. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union – Respect for and promotion of the values on which the Union is based, COM (2003) 606 final of 15 October 2003.

**20 October:** The EU Council reaches a political agreement on the health protection of workers exposed to **electromagnetic fields**.

2535<sup>th</sup> Council meeting – Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs – Luxembourg, 20 October 2003 (13538/1/03 REV 1, Presse 302).

**20 October:** The Community of European Railways (CER) and the European Transport Workers Federation (ETF) reach agreement on important **social framework conditions** for the European **railway** market. *Press release*, 20 October 2003, “Breakthrough agreement between social partners of the railway sector”.

**29 October:** The Council resolution on **undeclared labour** is published in the Official Journal. Council Resolution on transforming undeclared work into regular employment (2003/C 260/01) (OJ C 260 of 29 October 2003, page 1).

## **NOVEMBER**

**5 November:** Commissioner Anna Diamantopoulou presents to the College of Commissioners a proposal for a directive to combat **discrimination outside of the labour market**. Proposal for a Council Directive implementing the principle of equal treatment between women and men in the access to and supply of goods and services, COM (2003) 657 of 5 November 2003.

**11 November:** The Commission presents its “**Growth Initiative**” aimed at rekindling investment in networks and knowledge in the European Union. Communication from the Commission “A European Initiative for Growth - Investing in Networks and Knowledge for Growth and Jobs - Final Report to the European Council”, COM (2003) 690 final of 11 November 2003.

**11 November:** The Commission publishes an assessment of the Lisbon objectives concerning **education and training**. Communication from the Commission, “Education & Training 2010: The success of the Lisbon Strategy hinges on urgent reforms”, COM (2003) 685 final of 11 November 2003.

**18 November:** The Directive on certain aspects of the **organisation of working time** is published in the Official Journal. Directive 2003/88/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of

4 November 2003 concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time (OJ L 299 of 18 November 2003, page 9).

**19 November:** UNICE responds to the second stage consultation of the social partners on the **portability of supplementary pension rights**. UNICE Position Paper, 19 November 2003. “Commission’s Second Stage Consultation of Social Partners on Portability of Supplementary Pension Rights. UNICE Reply”.

**25 November:** The Ecofin Council unanimously calls on the European Commission to extend for a further two years the current **reduced rate of VAT** for labour-intensive services, which is due to expire at the end of December. 2546<sup>th</sup> Council meeting – Economic and Financial Affairs – Brussels, 25 November 2003 (14492/03, Presse 320).

**26 November:** The Chairman of the **Employment Task Force**, Wim Kok, presents to the European Commission its report entitled “Jobs, jobs, jobs – Creating more employment in Europe” ([http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/employment\\_strategy/pdf/etf\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/employment_strategy/pdf/etf_en.pdf)).

**28 November:** The European Commission publishes a report on **quality in work** in Europe. Commission Communication “Improving quality in work: a review of recent progress”, COM (2003) 728 final of 26 November 2003.

## DECEMBER

**1<sup>st</sup> December:** At the meeting of the Employment and Social Policy Council, the Fifteen reach a political agreement on updating Regulation (EEC) 1408/71 on the **coordination of social security systems**. 2549<sup>th</sup> Council meeting – Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs – Brussels, 1 and 2 December 2003, C/03/354, 15443/03 (Presse 354).

**9 December:** The High-Level Process of Reflection on **Patient Mobility** and Healthcare Developments in the EU, launched on 3 February 2003, concludes with the publication of a report containing 19 recommendations. *Bulletin quotidien Europe* No.8602 of 10 December 2003, page 14, and IP/03/1678.

**10 December:** The Commission proposes extending for a further two years the **reduced rates of VAT** applicable to labour-intensive services. Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 77/388/EEC to extend the facility allowing Member States to apply reduced rates of VAT to certain labour-intensive services. COM (2003) 825 final of 16 December 2003.

**11 December:** At the close of the **Tripartite Social Summit**, the social partners issue a joint message calling for more economic activity and employment in Europe in order to achieve the Lisbon objectives. Joint message of the European Social Partners to the Tripartite Social Summit, Brussels, (<http://www.etic.org/en/>).

**12 December:** The Brussels European Council approves the **Kok Report**. European Council, Brussels, 12 December 2003, Presidency Conclusions.

**17 December:** The Commission adopts its communication on the National Action Plans for **Social Inclusion**. Joint report on social inclusion summarising the results of the examination of the National Action Plans for Social Inclusion (2003-2005), COM (2003) 773 final of 12 December 2003.

**30 December:** The Commission launches a consultation on the review of the **Working Time** Directive. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions concerning the re-exam of Directive 93/104/EC concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time, COM (2003) 843 of 30 December 2003.

**30 December:** The Commission launches the debate on the relationship between social protection and employment (“**Making Work Pay**”). Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, “Modernising Social Protection for More and Better Jobs: a comprehensive approach contributing to making work pay”, COM (2003) 842 of 30 December 2003.

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