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**COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMME
IN THE SPHERE OF EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY –
PROGRESS**

2008 ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK

INTRODUCTION

The 2008 annual Plan of Work of the action programme for employment and social solidarity programme (hereafter PROGRESS) sets out the priorities for funding for 2008 as provided for in article 12.1 b) of the Decision establishing PROGRESS¹ (hereafter the Decision). The annual Plan of Work is articulated with the (draft) strategic framework for the implementation of PROGRESS (see section 2 below). The annual Plan of Work also reflects the views expressed by stakeholders, including in the context of the Employment Committee and the Social Protection Committee².

The 2008 annual Plan of Work covers the EU-27 Member States, the EFTA/EEA countries, in accordance with the EEA Agreement, Turkey, Croatia, Former Yugoslavian Republic Of Macedonia, and Serbia in accordance with the respective Memoranda of Understanding.

1. POLICY PRIORITIES IN THE EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY FIELDS

PROGRESS aims to strengthen the EU contribution in support of Member States efforts to create more and better jobs and to offer equal opportunities for all. The priorities for the 2008 Annual Plan of Work reflect the strategic objectives of the European Union in the employment, social affairs and equal opportunities as set out in the revised Lisbon Strategy. The Annual Plan of Work is articulated around three overarching priorities.

1.1. CONTRIBUTING TO THE LISBON STRATEGY FOR GROWTH AND JOBS

A new cycle of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs will be launched in 2008. The new cycle, which will cover the 2008-2011 period, should emphasise the need to adapt to change brought about by globalisation, technological change, demographic ageing and migration.

¹ See annex 1 to Decision n° 1672/2006/EC of 24 October 2006.

² Elaboration of the annual Plans of Work- PROGRESS Committee - Working document PROGRESS/004/2007

In line with the 2007 Spring European Council Conclusions, the new Lisbon cycle should also "better take into account the common social objectives of Member States". Gender issues related to those challenges should also be an integral part of the new cycle. In this context, the 2008 Plan of Work will:

- support the implementation of the European Employment Strategy, in particular through promoting flexicurity policies along its four main components and life-cycle approach to work. Continued efforts need to be made in terms of improving the matching of labour market needs through the modernisation of labour market institutions, including public employment services. There is also a need to better understand the impact of globalisation in European labour markets and to promote the decent work agenda inside and outside the EU. Finally, emphasis will be put on combating undeclared work, better forecasting skills needs and improving knowledge and understanding of migration and mobility patterns.

- support the implementation of the open method of Coordination (OMC) in the field of social protection and inclusion. The new cycle of the open method of coordination in the field of social inclusion and protection has been synchronised with the Lisbon Strategy to improve complementarity between them. Activities to be carried out under PROGRESS will aim at improving the knowledge base, reinforcing policy exchange and mutual learning, and strengthening the ability of stakeholders to take an active part in the OMC. They will reflect the European Union's social objectives under the OMC and in particular the priorities identified by the Social Protection Committee.

- support the improvement of the working environment and conditions including health and safety at work. Activities under PROGRESS will support the review, adaptation and completion of the Community legal "*acquis*" in the field of labour law and industrial relations, taking into account on-going developments in work organisation and in the labour markets. PROGRESS will also contribute to the implementation of the activities announced in the Commission Communication on "Improving quality and productivity at work: Community strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work"³.

Furthermore, PROGRESS will contribute to improving the adaptation capacity of sectors, companies, territories and workers to a fast-changing environment. Activities to be carried out will aim to improve anticipatory tools, promote a culture of anticipation of change amongst stakeholders (social partners, companies, public authorities, etc.), foster partnership and consensus-building within companies (through social dialogue) and between all stakeholders, equip people to manage change and cushion the impact of restructuring.

- support the promotion of the principle of non-discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or beliefs, disability, age and sexual orientation. Following the European Year of Equal Opportunities 2007 and the completion of the 2005 Anti-discrimination Framework Strategy⁴, PROGRESS will support the development and implementation of initiatives to strengthen the EU equal opportunities policy.

³ COM(2007) 62 final

⁴ COM(2005) 224 final

- support the promotion of gender equality. Gender equality is a fundamental right, a common value of the EU and a necessary condition for the achievement of the EU objectives on growth, employment and social adhesion. PROGRESS will support the implementation of the policy objectives for the next five years in this area, as defined in the Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men (2006-2010)⁵.

1.2. ENHANCING THE DELIVERY OF THE BETTER REGULATION AGENDA

The 2008 Plan of Work will contribute to the Better regulation agenda. The European Union has, over the years, developed a body of legislation which delivers economic development and environmental protection and improves social standards.

The Commission has launched a comprehensive strategy on better regulation to ensure that the EU regulatory framework contributes to achieving growth and jobs, while taking into account the social and environmental objectives. The EU Better Regulation agenda aims to simplify existing regulation, better design new regulation and increase compliance and effectiveness.

In this context, PROGRESS will help reinforce the analytical capacity. In turn, increased analytical capacity will feed into the development of evidence-based EU policies and legislation and increase the relevance of EU policies to the concerns and priorities of Member States and stakeholders. PROGRESS will also contribute to developing social impact assessment methodologies.

The legislative body in the field of employment, social affairs and equal opportunities is made up of some 80 texts. The primary responsibility for the application of Community law resides with the Member States, but the Commission has the central responsibility, in its role as 'Guardian of the Treaty', to monitor and enforce Community law. The Communication on "A Europe of Results – Applying Community law"⁶ identifies four main areas of action: improved risk-based preventive measures; improved information-exchange and problem-solving with Member States; prioritisation and acceleration in the management of infringements; and increased transparency. This involves cooperation with and between Member States, integration of implementation and enforcement considerations throughout the policy cycle, and strengthening assistance to Member States in the application of Community law (eg. training).

1.3. INFORMING AND INFLUENCING THE POLICY DEBATE ON FUTURE EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL ISSUES

In 2007, the Commission has launched a Social Reality Stocktaking exercise at EU level. On the basis of the results of the consultation, the Commission will propose a new social vision to foster European social cohesion and social sustainability in the 21st century. A renewed Social Agenda will flow from this vision.

⁵ COM(2006) 92 final

⁶ COM (2007) 502 final

The 2008 Plan of Work will support activities aimed to provide input into the review of the Lisbon Strategy which will take place in 2009/2010 in view of the preparation and definition of the cycle post-2011. In that context, work on identification of medium-term challenges on employment and on governance aspects will be carried out.

The 2008 Plan of Work will also contribute to improving knowledge and understanding of migration, in particular on the related employment and social aspects, through collection of statistics and social and economic research.

2. PROGRESS GENERAL OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

2.1. DESIGN EVIDENCE-BASED EU POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

The availability of reliable information and quality analysis is central to EU policy development. Studies, analyses and statistics are therefore key elements of the PROGRESS 2008 annual Plan of Work. The evidence gathered through studies, analysis and statistics will be instrumental in informing policy development in the context of the open method of coordination in the fields of employment (European Employment Strategy) and social protection and inclusion as well in the other policy areas covered by PROGRESS. The 2008 annual Plan of Work will continue to promote cooperation with international organisations or third countries, and in particular industrialised.

Priorities for 2008:

- Innovative methodologies to monitor labour markets (through micro data, surveys and indirect methods);
- Statistics and indicators on employment-related issues in cooperation with Eurostat and CEDEFOP;
- Effectiveness of policies on housing and homelessness to promote social cohesion
- Impact of public services expenditure on poverty
- Description , comparison and analysis of the different ways in which social impact assessment is currently carried out and recommendations on how to develop an effective social impact assessment tool
- Stakeholders' involvement in the implementation of the social inclusion/social protection process
- Data on private pension systems (sustainability, linkage between contributions and benefits, and a gender perspective);
- Skills needs for the future in light of the new economy requirements (in terms of competitiveness and innovation capacity);
- Restructuring and instruments of anticipation;
- Data and statistical tools on occupational accidents and diseases including economical aspects on occupational safety and health (e.g. insurance systems, indicators on cost of accidents and disease);
- Legislation, policies and good practices on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- Trade unions' practices in combating discrimination;
- Gender-related issues in the field of the European Employment Strategy, including gender equality at the workplace, and of the OMC on social protection;
- Gender statistics and indicators, including the data base on women and men in decision making;
- Analysis of current legislation on gender pay gap;

- Evaluation of the roadmap for equality between women and men.

2008 PROGRESS Budget:

20,885 million €(22,385 % of the PROGRESS 2008 operational budget).

2.2. EFFECTIVE INFORMATION SHARING/LEARNING

Work to improve the relevance of information goes hand in hand with the need to identify and disseminate examples of good practice and innovative approaches to the relevant stakeholders. PROGRESS will support exchanges of good practices, mutual learning activities and transfer of knowledge both at national and European levels.

The 2008 annual Work of Plan includes setting-up of relevant observatories, networks of specialised bodies foreseen under Community legislation, networks of national experts and organisation of mutual learning activities, in particular in the "employment" and "social protection and inclusion" sections.

Priorities for funding in 2008:

PROGRESS will finance activities in the following areas:

- Governance and ownership of the European Employment Strategy and Corporate Social Responsibility by all relevant stakeholders;
- Cooperation with third countries (Neighbourhood countries, China, India, etc.) and international organisations (ILO, OECD) in the context of increased globalisation;
- Peer review seminars on key priority issues in the areas of social protection and social inclusion
- Monitoring the developments at national level as regards poverty and social exclusion
- Collection of information on the socio-economic impact of social protection systems and reforms
- Care coordination to improve rational use of resources, and on issues relating to prevention, promotion and active ageing;
- Social services of general interest;
- EU labour law through the setting-up of legal experts networks and organisation of legal seminars;
- EU Health and safety law through the elaboration of good practice guides;
- Financial participation systems through exchanges of experiences and good practices;
- Work-related stress through the exchange of good practice and information, and setting-up of a network of practitioners/researchers;
- Awareness-raising on non-discrimination issues through national events or seminars;
- EU legislation on non-discrimination and gender equality through the setting-up of legal experts networks and legal seminars and trainings addressed to legal and policy practitioners;
- Combating discrimination faced by ethnic minorities;
- Reconciliation of work, private and family life through exchanges of experiences;

- Equal participation of women and men in decision-making through the setting up a European network and the up-dating of the database on women and men in decision making;
- Gender mainstreaming in Member States.

2008 PROGRESS Budget:

30,812 million €(33,024 % of the PROGRESS 2008 Operational Budget).

2.3. BETTER INTEGRATION OF CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

The integrated nature of PROGRESS gives the possibility of dealing with transversal themes that cuts across several sections (for example gender, poverty and non discrimination). Such transversal work contributes to increasing coherence and relevance of EU policies and legislation in the PROGRESS areas.

In this context, the 2008 annual Plan of Work will support a series of activities across sections. Several cross-cutting studies will be carried out. In addition, the 2008 Plan of Work includes activities in the following fields:

- Better application of Community legislation: improving the knowledge and understanding of the application of EU legislation in Member States and promoting co-operation with Member States and other stakeholders (social partners, NGO's, judges, lawyers, and experts);
- Support to key EU networks: financial support (covering disability, anti-discrimination, gender equality and social inclusion) will be granted to EU-level networks of NGOs. Potential beneficiaries have been invited to include cross-cutting issues in their work programme;
- Communication strategy on employment, social affairs and equal opportunities:

Equally, gender mainstreaming is one the fundamental principles for the implementation of PROGRESS. The gender perspective will be integrated, where relevant, in the definition and implementation of PROGRESS activities. This will include collection of disaggregated data by gender. Furthermore, accessibility requirements, including for people with disabilities, will be duly taken into account.

As regards the support for the implementation of PROGRESS, the 2008 Plan of Work will support activities related to the monitoring of the programme and the mid-term evaluation of PROGRESS.

2008 PROGRESS Budget:

1,791 million €(3.2 % of the 2008 PROGRESS Operational Budget)⁷.

2.4. GREATER CAPACITY NETWORKS TO PROMOTE AND DEVELOP POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES RELATED TO PROGRESS POLICY AREAS

⁷ This appropriation does not integrate the budget related to the support to EU key network activities or PROGRESS information and communication activities (see sections 2.4 and 2.5 below).

PROGRESS has a key-role to play in promoting the involvement of civil society, and in particular through financial support to key EU-level networks active in the fields of social inclusion, non-discrimination, disability and gender equality. Such involvement fosters accountability and transparency, and increase the relevance of policy responses. PROGRESS will also provide support to other key EU networks, such as European networks of equality bodies set up as part of Equality Directives.

Priorities for funding in 2008:

PROGRESS will provide support to the following key EU networks:

- Key EU-level NGOs networks active in the fight against discrimination and smaller networks working on the integration of disabled people and the defence of the Roma people rights;
- Key EU-level NGOs networks active in the fight against social exclusion;
- Key EU-level NGOs networks active in the promotion of gender equality;
- Network of women in decision-making;
- Network of national equality bodies in the non-discrimination field;
- Networks of local authorities/observatories on active inclusion.

2008 PROGRESS Budget:

14.228 million €(15,250 % of PROGRESS 2008 Operational Budget).

2.5. PROMOTING HIGH-QUALITY AND PARTICIPATORY POLICY DEBATE AT EU AND NATIONAL LEVELS

PROGRESS aims to promote shared understanding and consensus among all the relevant stakeholders on problem identification and policy options or solutions that respond to the real needs. EU policy initiatives need to benefit from broad-based support at both EU and national levels. PROGRESS contributes to creating such an enabling environment through the organisation of high-quality, inclusive and participatory policy debates.

Priorities for funding in 2008:

PROGRESS will provide support to the following activities:

- EU-level media campaign on communicating on the concrete benefits of EU employment, social and equal opportunities policies as well on PROGRESS;
- Promotion of debates on social inclusion and social protection, in support of the reinforcement of the social OMC
- EU-level media campaign on combating discrimination;
- EU-level awareness raising activities on eliminating gender stereotypes in companies and communication activities notably on eliminating gender pay gap;

- Thematic health and safety campaigns in cooperation with the labour inspectorates in the Member States (SLIC) and the Bilbao Agency. Special attention will be paid to emerging risks such as work-related musculoskeletal disorders;

- SLIC campaigns on manual handling of loads;
- Forums such as the annual round table on Poverty and Social Exclusion, the annual meeting of People Experiencing Poverty, the Restructuring Forum or Presidency Conferences on various EU policies;
- Networking activities between EU and national stakeholders at EU and national levels.

2008 PROGRESS Budget:

25,684 million € (27,528 % of PROGRESS 2008 Operational Budget).

3. ANNUAL FINANCIAL ENVELOPE

The draft financial envelope for the 2008 annual Plan of Work is 98,007 million € It comprises both Operational and Administrative Expenditures. Appropriations may be adjusted in light of the vote on the Budget 2008 by the Budgetary Authority.

3.1. OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURE

Operational expenditures (EU-27) in 2008 amount to 91.22 million € i.e. a 16% - increase compared to the 2007 Budget. This increase results from the additional budget of 100 million € which was agreed in the context of the 2006 Inter-institutional Agreement and which will be spread over the remaining duration of the programme. The contribution of EFTA-EEA countries amounts to 2.39% of the PROGRESS budget for 2008.

Total operational expenditures for 2008 (covering EU-27 and EFTA-EEA) therefore amount to 93.399 million €

The breakdown of the operational expenditure by policy section is as follows:

Policy Sections	Budget 2007	Budget 2008	Budget 2008 EFTA-EEA included	Increase from 2007 to 2008
Employment Budget line 04.040101	17	20	20,478	20,45%
Social Inclusion and Protection Budget line 04.040102	22,9	28,03	28,699	25,32%
Working Conditions Budget line 04.040103	10,1	10,2	10,443	3,39%
Non-discrimination Budget line 04.040104	19,55	20,52	21,010	7,46%
Gender Equality Budget line 04.040105	7,2	10,72	10,976	52,44%
Support to the implementation of the programme Budget line 04.040106	1,15	1,75	1,791	55,73%

The percentages of the various policy sections in the 2008 annual financial envelope are as follows.

	% in 2008	% in 2007	Average	PROGRESS Decision

				%
Employment	21,82%	21,92%	21,87%	23%
Social protection and inclusion	29,40%	30,7%	30,05%	30%
Working conditions	12,96%	11,18%	12,07%	10%
Anti-discrimination and diversity	25,09%	22,49%	23,79%	23%
Gender equality	9,24%	11,75%	10,50%	12%
Support to the implementation of the programme	1,47%	1,91%	1,69%	2%

3.2. ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENDITURE

Administrative expenditure amounts to 4.5 million € (compared to 4 million in 2007). With the contribution of EFTA-EEA countries, **total administrative expenditures for 2008 therefore amount to 4,607 million €**. The breakdown of administrative expenditure is as follows:

Administrative Expenditure	2007	2008
Studies	0,4	0,2
Experts' meetings	2	2,107
Information and Publication	1,25	1,7
Administrative and technical assistance	0,35	0,6
Total	4	4,607

3.3. INDICATION OF ACTIVITIES WORKLOAD

The 2008 annual Plan of Work is made up of 127 activities. The breakdown per section is as follows:

Policy Sections	Number of activities
Employment	36
Social Inclusion and Protection	22
Working Conditions	28
Non-discrimination	17
Gender Equality	21
Support to the programme	3
Total	127

In total, 73 calls are planned to be launched in 2008 (14 calls for proposals and 59 calls for tenders). A detailed breakdown by policy section follows:

Policy Sections	Open Calls for Tenders	Restricted Calls for Tenders	Renewal of current service contract	Open Calls for Proposals	Restricted Calls for Proposals	Subdelegation to ESTAT	Spontaneous subsidies - Monopolies de facto/dejure - Framework Partnership Agreements	Framework Contracts Outputs
Employment	13	2	1	6	1	4	10	11
Social Inclusion and Protection	7	6	2	2	1	1	20	2
Working Conditions	14	4	1	1	1	1	3	14
Non-discrimination	7	0	4	0	1	0	14	2
Gender Equality	5	0	6	0	1	1	2	5
2% support	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	47	12	15	9	5	7	49	35
	59		15	14		7	49	35

4. ACTIVITIES BY POLICY SECTION

The list of activities attached to the 2008 Plan of Work reflects the typology of activities detailed in the Decision, i.e. analytical activities, mutual learning, awareness and dissemination activities and support to main actors' activities.

The activities have been identified on the basis of the following criteria:

- clear alignment with the outcomes of the programme as identified in PROGRESS strategic framework;
- consistency with the specific policy EU objectives and priorities, as set out in the relevant policy documents for each section;
- focus on activities with highest EU value added;
- support to key stakeholders who have the capacity to be involved in the development and implementation of the specific policy objectives and priorities at both EU and national levels.

The details of the activities, including short description, targets, timeframe and the selection procedure, participation opened to candidate countries and Serbia, are given in the attached table.

The activities are presented under three different headings:

- recurring activities from 2007 annual Plan of Work (light yellow);
- new activities (orange);
- spontaneous activities (green).