



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

Directorate D
Director

Brussels, 23 June 2010
SG/D1/JA/ge ARES(2010) 360 763

CGP(2010)1

1ST MEETING OF THE COMMISSIONER'S GROUP ON PENSIONS

17 JUNE 2010

MINUTES

Chairperson: Mr ANDOR

In attendance: Mr BARNIER, Mr REHN, Mrs REDING

Subject: The Draft Green Paper "Towards adequate and safe European pension systems"

Presentation of the draft Green Paper:

Mr Andor presented the issue and the draft Green Paper. He stressed by way of introduction that Pensions is an issue that generates a lot of sensitivity and nervousness. It is important that this Green Paper is seen as the first stage in a relatively long process, and that it generates wide ranging broad dialogue. The role of this group was to deliver the Green Paper and then develop, outline and communicate an EU approach.

Mr Andor outlined the Pension challenge and in particular the effect that demographic change is now having on European Societies – with the working age population set to start declining from 2012. Compounding this the economic and financial crisis has made the situation more difficult.

The Green Paper takes a holistic approach. This is important for taking an EU wide approach that can add value in an area that is essentially a national competence. The Green Paper should not and does not develop concrete proposals for changes to EU legislation. If this is to come, it would probably follow by way of a White Paper after the consultation process. It is however primarily about launching an open, wide-ranging debate. Mr Andor suggested that the consultation process could run until 15th November, and will be followed by a summary publication of the results. The next steps could then be a White Paper.

The Green Paper develops three themes: Support for Member States in achieving a sustainable balance between time spent in work and retirement; removing obstacles to mobility in the EU; and safer, more transparent pensions.

Reactions:

All Members welcomed the Green Paper and the holistic approach. They welcomed the close collaboration of the services in drafting the Green Paper and all stressed the clear EU added value of the holistic approach, and in providing support for Member States in pushing forward difficult reforms. All stressed that the well balanced text was ready for publication and would like to see it published as scheduled on the 30th June.

Mrs Reding affirmed the importance of effective communication and in particular the issue of solidarity between generations. She outlined the importance of gender equality. This is more multi-dimensional than simply legislation on equal retirement ages for men and women, accounting also for a range of wider issues including gender equality in pay and childcare arrangements. The text should be slightly strengthened in this regard.

Mr Rehn welcomed the holistic approach as important in assisting Member States to push forward reforms. The current push for fiscal consolidation will not be sufficient without medium terms budgetary reforms, possibly the most important being pensions policy. Mr Rehn also welcomed a strengthening of the text to reaffirm gender equality issues. He also wondered if a slight strengthening of the text on automatic adjustment mechanisms Pensions policy must also address so called "softer" issues of motivating and legitimising working longer. Ecofin will discuss Pension issues in October / November and this should be seen as a complement / support to the Commissions work.

Mr Barnier stressed the importance of the group and the clear added value of an EU approach. The most difficult debates on Pension reform are national debates and the EU can help facilitate solutions. Mr Barnier noted the press leaks and argued this was a further reason to publish the Green Paper as soon as possible in order to ensure the debate took place based on facts and not speculation. He was therefore content with the suggested timing. He stressed the importance of involving the European Parliament in the debate at an early stage and would like to see the next meeting of the group discuss some early results of the consultation process.

Conclusion:

Mr Andor concluded that there was clear support for the approach taken by the paper. He also noted a broad consensus to propose the date of adoption as the 30th June. The Green Paper should be strengthened with a brief text on both gender, health issues and possibly on automatic adjustment mechanisms.

The Group should meet again in mid September and potentially discuss press reaction to the consultation process. Mr Rehn agreed to present on the impact of the economic crisis on Pension systems, and Mrs Reding will present on gender equality issues. Further issues for discussion within the group could be on Solidarity between generations, migration and enlargement.



Michel Servoz

GROUPE DE COMMISSAIRES " PENSIONS "

17 JUIN 2010

LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

Membres de la Commission:

Commissaire Andor
Commissaire Reding
Commissaire Rehn
Commissaire Barnier

Cabinets:

Mme Skuratowicz, cabinet Barroso
M. Uebe, cabinet Andor
M. Pálvölgyi, cabinet Andor
Mme Trama - Zada, cabinet Reding
M. Paserman, cabinet Tajani
Mme Vihriälä, cabinet Rehn
Mme Darmanin, cabinet Dalli
Mme Duarte Gaspar, cabinet Dalli

Services:

M. Servoz, Directeur, SG
M. Williams, SG
M. Verrue, Directeur Général, DG EMPL
Mme Blair, DG EMPL.
Mme Tomboy, DG EMPL
M. Eatock, DG EMPL
M. Koopman, Directeur, DG ECFIN
M. Staudenmayer, DG SANCO

Secrétaire de la réunion:

M. Allen, SG