

Update

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European Social Partners sign **Autonomous** Framework Agreement on **Active Ageing**



Front row: Mr. Joseph Farrugia (DG MEA); Ms. Valeria Ronzitti (DG CEEP); President Jean Claude Juncker; Ms. Emma Marcegaglia (President, Business Europe); President Donald Tusk; Prime Minister Joseph Muscat; and Ms. Ulrike Rabmer-Koller (President-UAPME)

On Wednesday 8th March 2017, the European Social Partners signed an agreement which deals with active ageing. The signatories to the agreement were: the CEEP (European Centre of Employers and

Enterprises providing Public Services), Business Europe, UAPME (European Association of Crafts, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises) and the ETUC (European Trade Union Confederation). The agreement

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was signed in the presence of President Jean Claude Juncker, President Donald Tusk and the Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat. Mr. Joseph Farrugia, Director General of MEA was part of the CEEP representation present for the signing.

A major objective of the agreement is to make it easier for older workers to stay in the labour market, healthy and active until the legal retirement age, as well as strengthening a culture of responsibility, commitment, respect and dignity in all workplaces where all workers are valued as important irrespective of age. It outlines tools/measures to be taken into account by social partners and/or HR managers in the context of national demographic and labour market realities, and in accordance with national practices and procedures specific to management and labour.

Through this document, the social partners agreed to recognise the added value of strategic assessments of workforce demography, carried out and periodically updated at the appropriate levels, in accordance with national practices and procedures. The strategic assessments include:

- (a) *Current and projected age pyramid, including gender aspects;*
- (b) *Skills, qualifications and experience;*
- (c) *Working conditions;*
- (d) *Job specific health and safety considerations in particular for arduous occupations;*



The Tripartite Social Summit for Growth and Employment

- (e) *Developments linked to digitalisation and innovation.*

The framework agreement also includes a set of measures to support health and safety at the workplace that are tailor-made to address needs of ageing employees, and measures to promote skills and competence management such as life-long learning and embedding age management into broader skills development.

The agreement also specifies that the social partners at the appropriate levels should aim to achieve a working environment which enables workers of all generations and ages to work together to enhance cooperation and inter-generational solidarity. Tools/measures to achieve inter-generational solidarity could amongst others include:

- (a) *Distributing tasks according to ability/skills/knowledge;*
- (b) *Tutoring/mentoring/coaching schemes to welcome and introduce younger workers to their working environment, including paths to allow them to fulfil their potential;*
- (c) *Knowledge/skills transfer programmes, both younger towards older workers and older towards younger workers, including IT and digital skills, transversal skills, customer relations skills, as appropriate;*
- (d) *The creation of knowledge banks to capture specific know how and professional intelligence developed in-house and pass it on to newcomers;*
- (e) *Awareness-raising on the importance of being age positive and promotion of*

age diversity including considering different possibilities regarding the balance between ages within teams;

- (f) *Collaboration with education institutions or public employment services to ease transitions into and within the labour market.*

Following this event, MEA also participated in a Tripartite Social Summit for Growth and Employment which included the participation of the Social Partners and which was chaired by the Hon. Evarist Bartolo. The summit was addressed by the President Juncker, President Tusk and Dr. Muscat.

During this session, Mr. Joseph Farrugia delivered a short address about the current discussions related to the European Pillar for Social Rights, which President Juncker had described as an

initiative that: ‘takes account of the changing realities of the world of work and which can serve as a compass for the renewed convergence within the euro area’. Mr. Farrugia stated that inasmuch that economic and social issues are interrelated, one needed to make an important distinction between a culture of entitlement as against one of enablement. He added that employers in general favour measures that enable workers to improve their economic and social situation, through access to education, life-long learning, recognition of informal skills, active ageing, gender equality and active labour market measures. Such an approach will be more productive that fostering a culture of entitlement through, for example, raising workers’ wage expectations with a disregard to productivity and global competitiveness. He

concluded that unfortunately, populist forces across the EU are promoting the latter, and this is gathering support for populism from the disillusioned 20m unemployed persons and the 70m unskilled persons across the EU who expect a better standard of living.

