

Steering brief

Scene setter

You will meet BUSINESSEUROPE, CEEP (European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public Services and Services of general interest), ETUC (European Trade Union Confederation) and SMEunited to discuss the **Commission Work Programme** (CWP) 2021.

This meeting should not overlap with the formal Commission consultation steps with the social partners already foreseen in the CWP process. You could make a brief introduction before listening to the views of your interlocutors.

It could be also interesting to orient discussions towards **long-term issues** and themes such as the reflection on how social partners see the twin transition deliver on the concerns the social partners might have.

On the **Foresight** Report, ETUC issued a press release on 9 September, stating that it supports any policy initiative that helps to manage change in a sustainable, fair and democratic way. It also advocates that "the proposals of the Foresight Report must turn into fairer and more inclusive policies by the European Commission and Member States." "ETUC will seek to ensure the involvement of unions in the foresight process and to ensure that the well-being of workers and their families are always at the forefront of EU policy-making."

Better Regulation rules could also be discussed. These rules and public consultation, when launched in parallel with two-stage social partner consultations, seem to be a source of confusion among social partners. They have raised the issue with the President, Vice-President Dombrovskis and Commissioner Schmit in the context of the Minimum Wage initiative (*letter in your file*).

Objectives of the meeting

- What we want:
 - Maintain contacts with the social partners.
 - Seek the view of the social partners on future CWPs, and in particular, their view of the likely impact of the twin transitions on employment.
 - Encourage your interlocutors to engage with us on foresight/long-term reflections, resilience and Better Regulation.
- What the interlocutor wants:
 - Maintain an open line of communication with you.

Key messages

On the Commission Work Programme

- President von der Leyen has put the social dimension at the core of our recovery strategy (Recovery package, State of the Union/Letter of Intent).
- This is also reflected in our forthcoming initiatives, including:
 - the Action Plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights (planned for early 2021; workshop with social partners took place in June)
 - an initiative to improve the working conditions of platform workers (2021)
 - a new Occupational Safety and Health Strategy (2021)
 - the Child Guarantee policy initiative (hearing with social partners planned on 16 October)

- Across all these initiatives – just for already launched policy proposals – we value very much the views of social partners.

On foresight

- The Commission adopted on 9 September 2020 its first annual Strategic Foresight Report. I trust it will offer ample food for thought for fruitful exchanges with all social partners on how to make our continent more resilient and fairer today and in the future.
- The Commission plans to embed foresight into EU policymaking. Examples include foresight exercises for all major policy initiatives, a collaborative and inclusive foresight cooperation and alliances with EU and international institutions and partners, including social partners.
- Every year, we will publish a forward-looking Strategic Foresight Report, testing issues of critical interest to Europe's future and analysing emerging trends and challenges to inform our policy- and decision-making.
- This year's report identifies social partners as an important capacity contributing to Europe's social and economic resilience. Through social dialogue, social partners contribute to sustainable and inclusive growth. Such social dialogue is more important than ever as we recover from this crisis.
- I intend to launch an EU-wide Foresight Network and believe that the upcoming European Strategy and Political Analysis System (ESPAS) Conference in November 2020 is the right moment to do this. If you would like to participate, please get in touch with us and we will send you an invitation.
- I invite you to share your views on this first foresight report and engage with the Commission on the next steps. I am interested to hear your recommendations on how we can foster cooperation on future reports and foresight projects.

On Better Regulation

- There is no Better Regulation requirement to have the public consultation running in parallel with the social partners' ones. A public consultation can in principle take place after the social partners two-stage consultations, depending on the circumstances.
- The forthcoming revision of the Guidelines and Toolbox will be an opportunity to clarify further the rules about stakeholder consultation activities for initiatives requiring two-stage social partner consultation including the timing of public consultation.

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