



# European Legislative Report

Issue 12, December 2006

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All back issues of UNI-Europa's European Legislative Review are available on-line:  
<http://www.union-network.org/unieuropeanews.nsf/legislativereport?openpage&login>

## 1. Commission unveils its 2007 work programme

On the 24 October 2006, the Commission unveiled its work programme for next year. Trade unions should not be concerned about having too little to do after the services directive! Alongside a list of 21 concrete strategic initiatives, the main policy actions to be adopted over the next 12-18 months are identified in the programme, which can be found on-line:

[http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/docs/clwp2007\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/docs/clwp2007_en.pdf)

The Commission will take the better regulation initiative to a new phase, by identifying 47 simplification initiatives (among other areas, environmental and labour market legislation, e.g. revision of directive 2001/23 on transfer of undertakings) and 10 withdrawals of pending legislation (though the temporary work directive has been given a reprieve here). In addition, a list of priorities for communicating with citizens is included for the first time. The top priorities for 2007, which are most relevant to service and communication workers, are as follows:

- A stocktaking exercise of European society to build “a new consensus on the social challenges facing Europeans”, which will be presented in the first half of 2007;
- Communication on ‘**flexicurity**’ due in June 2007, which aim to help member states adopt a set of common principles by the end of the year;
- The end of the consultation (31 March 2007) and follow-up to the green paper on **labour law** (outline directions which may lead to legislative or non-legislative initiatives)
- Mid-term review of the implementation of the Social Agenda 2006-2010, with new agenda for access and solidarity and refocus of priorities in the employment and social fields;
- Single market review (with policy directions to re-connect citizens);
- Green Paper on universal services in **electronic communications** (which could lead to legislative proposals in 2008), and legislative proposals amending the legal framework for electronic communications;
- 14th company law directive on the **cross-border transfer of seat** (it will contain specific provisions on employee participation – ETUC already fears that the minimum floor of rights contained in the European company statute as well as the EWC directive would be reduced even further);
- Proposals to amend the directive on **investment funds** (UCITS) – see section on private equity below;
- There is due to be a Communication on the implementation of the directive on **information and consultation** (COM(2002)14), this is due to feed into a simplification and codification of information and consultation directives and terms (including the definition on ‘information’ and ‘consultation’);
- The **transfer of undertakings directive** will be revised following discussion with the social partners;
- Communication on a more harmonised interpretation of key provisions on the **Data Protection Directive**;

- Proposal for a directive on the award of concessions, following the consultation on **public-private partnerships**;
- On the better management of **migration** flows proposals will include:
  - Legislative proposal addressing the general framework of labour immigration;
  - A 'green card' system for economic migrants; and
  - Minimum sanctions for employers of undocumented 3rd country nationals.
- Annual **enlargement** strategy paper; and
- Renewed **market access** strategy (this relates mainly to international trade and reciprocity arrangements therein):
  - Reinforcement of the Neighbourhood Policy (no specific mention of Euromed)
  - Progress in negotiations with major strategic partners such as Russia, China and Ukraine.

In a wide-ranging debate on the Commission's work programme for 2007, the Parliament gave it a mixed welcome. The EP will vote on a resolution during the December plenary session in Strasbourg.

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## 2. Services in the internal market: the directive passes the last hoop

The services directive has finished its dance with the EU institutions, and has left the institutions in a very different form from that which landed on our desks in January 2004.

The European Parliament 2<sup>nd</sup> reading vote on the services directive, on the 15 November 2006, was in marked contrast to the 1<sup>st</sup> reading vote. The successful trade union mobilisation in February 2006, which resulted in MEPs voting to change the text of the directive considerably, gave the vote a drama rarely felt in the EP. The short debate and quick vote on the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading report was a much quieter affair. Thus, the services directive passed the last hoop of the legislative process smoothly and the EP adopted the Council position.

Following the adoption of the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) committee's 2<sup>nd</sup> reading report on the services directive on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2006 where no amendments were accepted to the Council's text on the services directive, EP Rapporteur Evelyne Gebhardt decided not to propose further amendments to the text. A number of MEPs decided to table amendments in the plenary (notably, a group of French Socialists, the Green group and the far-Left GUE-NGL MEPs). None of these amendments came close to adoption in the context of a blocking coalition of Conservative and Liberal MEPs (and some Socialists) prepared to adopt the Council text unamended. However, Commissioner McCreevy tried to address the demands for clarification by coming up with a declaration accompanying the adoption of the Directive: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/06/687&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Consequently, the original services directive has been totally revised and many of our demands have been met:

- the country of origin principle is abolished, enabling Member States to exercise better supervision and to apply national rules to protect the public interest;
- labour law is excluded, and in particular issues linked to the posting of workers;
- fundamental rights to collective bargaining and action are to be respected;

- services of general interest and some services of general economic interest, such as healthcare and social services are excluded;
- sensitive sectors, such as temporary work agencies and private security services are excluded.

UNI-Europa and the ETUC welcomed the backing of the EP's compromise by the Commission and then the Council in its first reading. However, we criticised the introduction by the Council of some ambiguous language with regard to the most sensitive issues, such as the exclusion of labour law and respect for fundamental rights. The responsibility will now be in the hands of national policy-makers as the directive is transposed to ensure that the language of national laws implementing the directive is unambiguous. UNI-Europa intends to support affiliates through the transposition phase.

Meanwhile, following the adoption of the services directive, within the EP, the conference of presidents had given the green light to the IMCO committee to table a **own-initiative report on the impact of the exclusion of health services** from the services directive.

Bernadette Vergnaud (PES, FR) has been appointed as Rapporteur for the report. On the 22 November 2006, she introduced the outline of her report. Her starting point for debate is the Commission's Communication on healthcare and patients' mobility published in September 2006. The Communication was in response to the fact that in 5 years the number of cross-border patients has grown by five times - triggering the need to define a framework within which patients and providers alike can exercise their rights. The report will look at reimbursement of healthcare costs; member states' discretion in organising and financing health care (and how this could result in discriminatory restrictions); legal certainty on liability; link to long term care and social services of general interest. A priori, the rapporteur believes that a directive would not be the most appropriate instrument to address these issues. As far as the timetable is concerned, the draft report will be presented at the end of January-beginning of February 2007; vote in IMCO: March and plenary thereafter, since the Commission wants to bring forward proposals in June 2007.

More information is available on the UNI-Europa virtual network on services:  
<http://www.union-network.org/unieuropaservicesvc.nsf>

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### 3. Working time directive: Finnish Presidency fails to find a deal too

Throughout October 2006, the Finnish Presidency conducted a tough set of negotiations on a proposal for a compromise in the Council on the revisions to the working time directive. On the 19 October, the Finnish Presidency produced a new text of the draft amendments. This proposal was discussed in an extraordinary Employment and Social Affairs Council on the 7 November 2006. However, agreement was elusive in the Council thanks to a number of governments' refusal to accept the maintenance of the individual opt-out from the 48-hour working week (notably, the Italian, Spanish, French, Greek and Cypriot governments). Very few actors mentioned the word 'workers' in the course of the negotiations with all focus on flexibility for companies.

The Finnish proposal abandoned the idea of ending the individual opt-out from the 48-hour working week. Rather, the Finns proposed some measures to tighten its use and overall the Finns proposed that no worker should be obliged to work more than 60 hours a week (calculated over 3 months). The Finnish proposal would have also made 'on-call' time a third

category of time (neither working nor rest time) and annualised the reference periods for maximum working hours. These proposals were wholly unacceptable to the union movement: <http://www.etuc.org/a/3010>

Since the Council meeting, the Commission has broadly criticised the countries that defended the union position. Infringement procedures have been launched against 23 member states (except Italy and Luxembourg) to ensure that ECJ rulings on on-call work are applied at national level (meaning that on-call work is counted in the calculations of maximum working hours).

On the 23 November, the Finnish Presidency and Commissioner Špidla presented the current state of play to the EP's Employment and Social Affairs committee. The Finns are currently consulting what options are left on the table (including a possible split in the directive dealing with the opt-out and the issue of on-call work separately). It is unlikely that the issue will be raised in the Employment Council on the 1 December 2006. The German Presidency has made it clear that they do not intend to focus on the issue in their 6-months.

For further information about working time issues, please contact: [Judith.kirton-darling@union-network.org](mailto:Judith.kirton-darling@union-network.org)

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#### **4. Green Paper on Labour Law: Commission finally unveils the Green Paper**

Following months of waiting for the Commission to bring forward its Green Paper on Labour Law, which was announced in the last Social Agenda (2005-2010), the document was adopted by the College of Commissioners on the 22 November 2006.

Working on the basis of the leaked copy of the text, on the 4 October 2006, UNICE wrote a letter to Commission President José Manuel Barroso urging Barroso and other Commissioners to "reconsider both the Green Paper's content and the timing for its publication". Following this overt attack from the employers' side of the table, the Commission delayed the Green Paper and withdrew a Communication on labour market reform due to be published with it. The questions in the Green Paper and the tone of the paper have changed significantly from earlier drafts.

The Green Paper considers how national labour law could be adapted in the future to ensure that economic flexibility is accompanied by worker protection. It is one element of the wider Commission discussion on flexicurity and launches a public consultation on the labour law dimension of the debate. The paper largely concentrates on individual employment relations, although unions are also concerned about collective issues (such as the coverage of freelance and contract staff in terms of basic trade union rights). The text asks a number of questions of pertinence to the union movement, despite the increased language about flexibility, especially as regards the rights and protection of economically dependent, freelance and temporary workers. See the Green Paper on-line:

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/labour\\_law/green\\_paper\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/labour_law/green_paper_en.htm)

On the 17 November 2006, UNI-Europa held a meeting on the issue to start working towards a common approach: <http://www.union-network.org/unieuropeanews.nsf/5076d3f26c7c9ad9c1256c060028a790/45add9ed4493d216c125722e004c6847?OpenDocument>

UNI-Europa has established a network of experts and an internet page dedicated to gathering information and opinion on labour law and the Green Paper: <http://www.union-network.org/unieuropalabourlawnetwork.nsf>

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### **5. New case before the ECJ on the application of the posting of workers directive**

The Dirk Ruffert case is another worrying legal case on the application of the posting of workers directive, following in the wake of the Vaxholm/Laval and Viking Line cases, which are already before the ECJ. This time the case focuses explicitly on the possible different legal effect of demanding "comparable/equal wages" or "minimum wages". The referring German court suggests that article 49 of the Treaty prohibits the demand to pay wages "that are at least at the level of the wages that are foreseen on the basis of the collective agreement that applies to the place where the work is done", because these may be higher than the minimum wage that would otherwise be applicable, and more in general this kind of public procurement obligations would prevent foreign service providers from competing on the basis of lower wages.

The time schedule is as follows. A German Court sent the reference for a preliminary ruling to the ECJ on the 18 July 2006. Member States and EC institutions were notified by the ECJ around the 28 September 2006 (the date may vary between Member States). The deadline for written observations to the ECJ is 2 months and 10 days after the day of notification, (so this may vary as well). A large number of intervening Member States supporting the view that a contracting entity may demand that the contractor – be he German or foreign – applies 'equal' wages both in the interest of protecting workers as in the interest of preventing unfair competition is important. The Commission also should support this view in its submission.

The ETUC has called for member states to intervene with the ECJ on the case. A briefing note on the specific details of the case is available on request.

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### **6. Health and safety: Commission's strategy due to be revealed in December**

The early findings of the European Working Conditions Survey were unveiled on 7 November in Brussels by the director and experts from the Dublin Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. The survey, done in late 2005 among a sample of nearly 30,000 workers from the EU25 plus Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, Turkey, Switzerland and Norway, found that 80% of European workers are 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their working conditions. But, 35% of those surveyed reported that work affects their health. This news comes as the Commission is due to publish its strategy on health and safety for 2007-2013 in December 2006. The strategy is due to include proposals to 'simplify' European health and safety legislation in the framework of the EU's Better Regulation strategy. For more information see: <http://hesa.etui-rehs.org/uk/default.asp>

The Commission has already announced in its work programme for 2007 that the framework directive on health and safety minimum requirements for the use of work equipment at work, and subsequent directives amending it, will be simplified and codified in the course of next year.

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## 7. Supplementary pensions: the debate rumbles on slowly in the EP

The directive on the portability of supplementary pensions has slowly continued its route through the institutions. There is little extra to report this month, as the Employment and Social Affairs committee has not openly discussed the legislation since September/October. The timetable is as follows: an exchange of views will be held in the Employment and Social Affairs committee on the 18-19 December; the committee will vote on the 24 January 2007; and the plenary will consider the directive in February 2007. At that stage the member states will have their first chance to formally respond on the directive. There is due to be an informal discussion in the Employment and Social Affairs Council on the 1 December 2006.

*Background: On the 20 October 2005, the European Commission proposed new rules allowing workers to take their pension with them when they change jobs. The commission's proposal would give workers 18 months to choose whether to transfer pension rights from their old company's pension scheme to that of their new employer. It would also guarantee that workers who choose to leave their pension rights with their old company would not be penalised for moving jobs by a reduction in the value of their pension. Workers with small pension rights – such as those who changed jobs after only a few years – would also have the option of taking a cash payment rather than transferring the rights to a new pension scheme. And current conditions on eligibility – the length of service needed to qualify for a company pension scheme – will also be eased to benefit people who change jobs frequently. For more information: [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/social\\_protection/pensions\\_en.htm#improving](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_protection/pensions_en.htm#improving)*

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## 8. Private equity: Commission publishes White Paper on the modernisation of the EU's investment fund market

Earlier in the year we reported on the expert consultation on future public policy relating to private equity and hedge funds, conducted by the Commission. Private equity and hedge funds are becoming increasingly important in the European economy. The issue of private equity continues to increase in relevance across all UNI-Europa sectors. This development merits your attention and demands a union response.

Private equity is concerned with the private ownership of companies – i.e. those not listed on the stock market. However, recently there has been a trend from private equity funds (groups of investors pooling capital for investment) to target publicly traded companies and, following the purchase, subsequently de-list them from the markets. This is known as a leveraged buy-out (LBO). Private equity operations often look only at the short to medium term future and profit margins, and have been linked to rapid restructuring and a decline in social relations in a number of prominent companies.

On the 16 November 2006, the European Commission set out its vision for the modernisation of the EU framework for all investment funds (the UCITS directive). Currently, private equity and hedge funds are excluded from the scope of the directive. The proposals, which are put forward in a White Paper, aim to simplify the current Directive on investment funds to allow greater cross-border activity and mergers. The Commission's stated aim is to make it easier for the industry to achieve cost savings and specialisation benefits across the single market. Following further studies on cost-effectiveness and investor protection, the Commission plans to propose changes in autumn 2007, in the form of amendments to the current Directive.

The Commission clearly favours the promotion of private equity investment. After a review of the rules and restrictions on offering private alternatives to institutional investors and others, the Commission will make proposals in autumn 2007 on how to establish a common European approach on 'private placement' to promote cross-border transactions.

See the White Paper and its impact assessment:

[http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/securities/ucits/index\\_en.htm#061116](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/securities/ucits/index_en.htm#061116)

UNI-Europa is working with the European Socialist group in the European Parliament as they research and make proposals on the alternative investment market. UNI-Europa's response to the Commission's expert consultation is available on-line:

[http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/securities/docs/ucits/expert-group/comments/uni-europa.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/securities/docs/ucits/expert-group/comments/uni-europa.pdf)

UNI hosted an international seminar of the trade union federations to discuss the issue on 16 November 2006, for more information: <http://www.union-network.org/uniinfo.nsf/58f61ccf5875fe90c12567bb005642f9/f5f6178ef2b1e59fc125722900339527?OpenDocument>

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## **9. The future of the internal market for services and services of general interest**

Following the public consultation on a future single market policy, which took place earlier this year, a public hearing took place on the 29 November 2006. UNI-Europa's Regional Secretary Bernadette Ségol was the only representative of workers and the trade union movement speaking on a panel in the hearing. She stressed that unions are very concerned that the Commission is stepping away from the social dimension of the internal market and that this attitude is likely to have very serious political consequences in the years to come. "Increasingly the internal market is being challenged 'from within' by workers because they have lost much of their trust in the neo-liberal agenda of deregulation and privatisation pursued by the Commission", emphasised Bernadette Ségol.

Following this hearing, the Commission is due to submit a report on single market policy in the future, to be presented to Head of Government (the European Council) in 2007. An interim report will be presented to the European Council in spring 2007.

On 28 November 2006, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) launched a campaign to collect one million signatures to put pressure on the Commission to present a framework directive for the safeguard of services of general interest (SGI). For more information and to sign the petition go to following website: <http://www.petitionpublicservice.eu/>

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## **10. Postal services: Commission proposes full market opening by 2009**

On the 18 October 2006, the European Commission put forward a proposal to fully open EU postal markets to competition by 2009:

[http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/post/legislation\\_en.htm#proposal](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/post/legislation_en.htm#proposal)

Although the Commission still praises the principle of the universal postal service, it gives no feasible answer about how to guarantee the financing of the obligation to provide the universal postal service. Today the obligation is financially guaranteed by a very limited monopoly (i.e. mail weighing less than 50g), which the Commission's proposal will eliminate, but which is the only method that has been proved to work.

For this reason UNI-Europa Postal is urging member states and MEPs to oppose the legislation, since if adopted, the Commission's proposal would harm the scope, the quality and the accessibility of the postal services which are currently being offered to EU citizens. Moreover, UNI-Europa Postal is particularly concerned by the employment prospects that the Commission's proposal will have on both the number and the quality of jobs.

Within the EP, Markus Ferber (EPP, DE) is Rapporteur for the legislation in the Transport and Tourism committee. Work will get underway in the committee in January 2007. Ministers will have a first informal discussion on the legislation at the Council meeting on the 12-13 December 2006.

For more information see UNI-Europa Postal's website (<http://www.union-network.org/unipostal.nsf/index?openpage>) or contact John Pedersen ([John.Pedersen@union-network.org](mailto:John.Pedersen@union-network.org)).

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### **11. Revamping the TV without frontiers directive into the audiovisual-media services directive gets going in EP**

The European Commission is trying to rally support for a sweeping overhaul of media regulations after policy makers softened proposals to govern the emerging digital media with the same rules that traditional broadcasters are required to live by. However, the Council has been accused of trying to circumvent the EP debate by trying to develop a common position on the audiovisual-media services directive 4 weeks before the EP will adopt its first reading report.

On the 13 November, the EP's Education and Culture committee adopted its report on the legislation. The committee agreed to propose that the scope of the directive should include not only traditional TV, but also new non-linear formats like IP-TV and TV-on-demand. Within the committee the most contentious issue was that of product placement. Here the committee agreed that product placement could be allowed in many programmes and films if it was applied transparently, but not in news or children's programming. The plenary will consider the legislation in December.

Simultaneously, on the 13-14 November 2006, the Culture and Education Council discussed and agreed on a revised draft of the proposal, published on the 7 November by the Finnish Presidency. Formally the Council cannot give its opinion on the legislation before the EP has adopted its 1<sup>st</sup> reading report in plenary. Consequently, many see the political agreement as an affront to the EP.

The Finnish proposal significantly narrows the scope of the Commission's proposal in an effort to appease the British government, one of the fiercest opponents of extending TV- style regulation to cover new media. See the proposal:

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st14/st14616.en06.pdf>

The Finnish Presidency's text proposes extending the TV without frontiers directive to apply television broadcast rules, including quotas for European production and limits on advertising, to video-on-demand and other television-like new media. However, the British government supported by the internet industry opposed the Commission's draft fearing that it would have gone even further, potentially subjecting private web sites, blogs and web cams to regulation. The Finnish proposal specifies that the regulations should cover only material over which a media organization exercises "editorial responsibility." According to sources close to the Council, the governments opposing the Commission's text agreed to extend the scope of the

directive if the country of origin principle's future was guaranteed. Several countries, including France, are said to want to change the so-called country-of-origin principle because it is easier to send programming across borders via the Internet than it is over the broadcast airwaves. That means media companies could get around one country's regulations by basing themselves in another EU member state.

The EP will vote on its first reading report in the plenary session of the 11-14 December 2006.

*Background:* A proposal to update the EU's 1989 "TV without Frontiers" Directive, to keep pace with rapid technological and market developments in Europe's audiovisual and media sector, was tabled by the European Commission on the 13 December 2005:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/reg/tvww/modernisation/proposal\\_2005/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/reg/tvww/modernisation/proposal_2005/index_en.htm)

Euro-MEI's position is available on-line: <http://www.union-network.org/unimei.nsf/501e914dd24249e1c12568750041bafb/932a2d75a4befdbac125719d002aaa19?OpenDocument>

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## 12. ICT task force report proposes ways to boost the European ICT industry

A strong priority for interoperability on all fronts is necessary to increase the competitiveness of the European information and communication industries. A report, adopted on the 27 November 2006 by the European Commission's Task Force on ICT competitiveness and uptake, recommends a strong focus on developing digital and entrepreneurial skills, strengthening the internal market, reducing patent costs, and the promotion of lead markets through public procurement as well. The ICT Task Force is one of several Commission actions undertaken to create a more favourable EU business environment under the Growth and Jobs initiative. The Commission will follow up the ICT Task Force's recommendations in 2007 with proposals for specific actions, such as designing a long-term eSkills strategy and promoting interoperability.

The ICT Task Force was launched on 6 June 2006. Bernadette Ségol represented UNI-Europa in the high-level meetings while Gerd Rohde was a Sherpa in the process. The report concludes a five-month debate resulting in the following principal recommendations:

- ICT uptake: As ICT investment is a strong driver of economic efficiency and productivity growth, the Task Force calls for structural reforms for a more flexible production environment, continued investment in next-generation networks and services and online public services, as well as creating a charter of consumer rights in the digital environment.
- Growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurship: Train entrepreneurial skills, raise firms' awareness of the benefits of ICTs, and improve access to finance.
- A single regulatory environment: Deliver a regulatory environment that facilitates convergence and an inclusive information society, foster the creation of an internal market for knowledge-intensive services, and review copyright levies.
- Intellectual property: Given the diversity of IPR models in the ICT sector, wide consultation should take place before changing EU legislation. Also, limit criminalisation for IPR infringement to wilful counterfeiting of trademarks, copyright infringement and design piracy. Promote the adoption of the London Protocol, and reduce patent costs.
- Innovation, investment and finance in ICT research to face globalisation: Exchange best innovation practices, stimulate research through tax credit schemes, support collaborative research via European Technology Platforms and Joint Technology Initiatives, support the development of lead markets through public procurement, secure a level playing-field for the European semiconductor industry, create a venture capital-friendly environment, and further reform of State Aid policy.

- Standards and interoperability: As industry is primarily responsible for technical interoperability support for Commission efforts to address legal and semantic interoperability, promote effective conformance systems, and develop procurement policies that promote interoperability.
- Skills and employability: As growing e-skills gaps limit innovation and ICT uptake increase investment in teachers' professional development and teacher support mechanisms, increase collaboration between industry, governments, employers and education institutions, and continue efforts in incorporating entrepreneurship into educational curricula.

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### **13. Transnational collective bargaining: Commission analyses agreements and hold 2<sup>nd</sup> seminar on issue**

The Commission has finally published the legal study commissioned to consider the implications of creating a European framework for transnational collective bargaining and a series of papers analysing agreements already reached in EWCs:

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/labour\\_law/documentation\\_en.htm#5](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/labour_law/documentation_en.htm#5)

A second seminar will take place on the 27 November 2006 to consider the issue further.

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### **14. Contribution of trade policy to the Lisbon objectives**

On 4 October 2006, Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson presented a new strategy aimed at increasing the EU's trade policy contribution to its Lisbon programme for growth and jobs. While reaffirming its support for global trade talks within the WTO, the new paper, *Global Europe: competing in the world*, sets the conclusion of bilateral trade agreements as a top priority following the suspension of the Doha Round.

While business views this approach as a necessary 'Plan B' that will help European companies gain access to new markets, thereby stimulating competitiveness and growth in Europe, NGOs see the Commission's new trade strategy as an abandonment of the multilateral agenda and an attempt to push the interests of European business before the needs of the poor and the environment.

For more information: [http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/october/tradoc\\_130376.pdf](http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/october/tradoc_130376.pdf)

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### **15. UNI-Europa's training guide to campaigning and the co-decision procedure**

Find UNI-Europa's campaigning guide 'Anticipating Change in the Internal Market' available on our circulars database: <http://www.union-network.org/UNICirculars06.nsf/all/8E329A36565AC116C125715D0031B9BE?OpenDocument>

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## 16. TIMETABLE OF POLICY MEETINGS

For all EP committee meetings' agendas and meeting documents, see the committees' homepage: <http://www.europarl.eu.int/activities/expert/committees.do>

December	1	Working time Temporary work Green Paper on Labour Law Simplification of health and safety directive Supplementary pensions	Employment and Social Affairs Council
	6	Working time	ETUC ad-hoc task force on the working time directive
	11-12	Postal services	Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (presentation of the Commission)
	11		Industry, Research and Energy committee
		Rome I and II	Legal Affairs committee
	18-19	Postal services	Transport and Tourism committee
			Employment and Social Affairs committee
	19		Industry, Research and Energy committee
			Internal Market and Consumer Protection committee
	19-20		Economic and Monetary Affairs committee
20		Legal Affairs committee	
January	17		ETUC Social Policy and Legislation working group
	22-23		Industry, Research and Energy committee
	22-24	Postal services	Transport and Tourism committee
	23-24		Economic and Monetary Affairs committee

		Supplementary pensions	Employment and Social Affairs committee
	23-25		Internal Market and Consumer Protection committee
	29-30		Legal Affairs committee
	30		Economic and Monetary Affairs committee
	30-1		Industry, Research and Energy committee
February	28-1		Economic and Monetary Affairs committee
			Internal Market and Consumer Protection committee

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