

## First Foresight Report published by the European Commission

Presented on Wednesday 9 September, the first annual Strategic Foresight Report “Strategic Foresight - Charting the course towards a more resilient Europe” presents the Commission’s strategy to integrate strategic foresight into EU policymaking. It identifies first lessons from the COVID-19 crisis, introduces resilience as a new compass for EU policymaking and discusses the role of strategic foresight in strengthening the resilience of the EU and its Member States. The report analyses resilience along four interrelated dimensions – social and economic, geopolitical, green, and digital – and explains its importance for achieving our strategic long-term objectives in the context of the digital, green and fair transitions.

You can consult the full report [here](#), as well as the 2 accompanying technical papers [here](#) and [here](#).

## PROJECTS & EVENTS

### Renewal of the EU Partnership for Integration by the Social and Economic Partners and the European Commission

On Monday 7 September 2020, the European Commission – represented by Commissioners Johansson and Schmit – and the European Social and Economic Partners (CEEP, ETUC, BusinessEurope, SMEunited and EuroChambres) renewed their commitment to the [European Partnership for Integration](#) – that was signed in December 2017 – with a [joint statement](#).

On the same day, DG Home confirmed the date of the 30 September 2020 for the release of the much-awaited New Pact on Migration and Asylum, reforming asylum, promoting integration and offering job opportunities to skilled workers. The Pact is expected to enhance the importance of migration in the context of the economic recovery post-pandemic.

Indeed, in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, CEEP and its partners “recall the need for a comprehensive approach to integration that empowers all relevant stakeholders at local, national and European level, and the essential role played by public authorities.”. The importance of a multi-stakeholder approach for early integration into the labour market, which is what CEEP and ETUC have been encouraging in the past years through the many practical actions jointly implemented at the national, regional and local level, remains key in this phase where SGIs and local and regional authorities are already suffering from pandemic-related constraints that are largely diminishing their working capacities. Also, looking beyond the current crisis, the signatories emphasised that labour migration can offer a unique opportunity to support

economic growth and make labour markets more resilient. Cooperation with countries of origin and better intelligence on skills and labour market shortages can play an important role in this endeavour.

Should you wish to receive more information on the Ceremony, on the Pact, or on migration and integration, do not hesitate to contact CEEP Project Manager, [Carlotta Astori](#).

## SOCIAL AFFAIRS BOARD

### Minimum wage second stage consultation: summary of the Social Partners' responses

According to the Employers' organisations (CEEP, BusinessEurope and SMEunited), the EU does not have the competence to introduce a binding legal instrument to regulate minimum wages. For employers, these issues fall within the competence of the national social partners and Member States. For European cross-sectoral employers, the Commission should under no circumstances opt for a Directive, as this would, by definition, transfer power to the legislator and the courts and would risk exceeding the EU's competences.

Further to this general observation, the EU cross-sectoral social partners expressed different conditions before opening negotiations on the issue of minimum wages.

[CEEP](#) would like to explore together with the other EU social partners if there is ground for negotiations at EU level. This requires the clear approval of a legal basis for their competence. Given that approval, CEEP would be open to explore the possibility further to negotiate on the content of a Council Recommendation provided that the legal conditions enables a recommendation.

Highlighting the need to preserve the competences of the national social partners regarding wage setting, [BusinessEurope](#) would be prepared to seek a mandate for entering into negotiations with the European Trade Unions with a view to concluding a European framework agreement on aspects of minimum wages compatible with article 153 (1f) and 153 (5) and to be implemented through a Council recommendation under article 155 of the TFEU. In the absence of such negotiations under article 155 of the Treaty, for example because the European Trade Unions are not willing to enter negotiations under these conditions, and if the Commission was to make a proposal, only a non-binding Council recommendation would be appropriate. Furthermore, such a recommendation should be drafted with full involvement of the European Social Partners and of national governments as part of a tripartite process, thereby ensuring full respect of Member State competence as well as of national social partners' role and autonomy.

[SMEunited](#) is open to a dialogue between social partners at EU level under Article 155 TFEU on the different objectives proposed by the Commission especially on strengthening social dialogue in wage setting mechanisms and promoting collective bargaining. This dialogue should fully respect national traditions, social partners' autonomy and the freedom of collective bargaining as stated by the Commission. Under these conditions, SMEunited declares its readiness to start a formal dialogue, in view of negotiating a Council recommendation to be monitored in the European Semester.

Finally, the [European Trade Union Confederation \(ETUC\)](#), building on the responses of the employers

during the first stage consultation, does not foresee an opportunity to open social partners negotiations which could achieve a positive outcome. The ETUC remains open to discuss this possibility in case there is a clear and public engagement by employers' organisations of their willingness to open negotiations to deliver an ambitious agreement leading to a Council Directive to ensure that statutory minimum wages – where they exist – guarantee at least a decent standard of living for workers, and to promote collective bargaining, in particular sectoral collective bargaining.

The issue was covered by Agence Europe, who published the [following article](#) on the employers' responses.

## SUSTAINABILITY BOARD

### **Register and join the CEEP Webinar on Smart Sector Integration on 15/09**

On Tuesday 15 September, CEEP will organise from 15:00 to 16:00 a webinar on “Smart Sector Integration and beyond - How SGIs can contribute to its success”.

For this session, we will welcome MEP Maria Spyraiki (EPP, Greece, ITRE - committee on Industry, Research and Energy) and Antonio Lopez-Nicolas, Deputy Head of the Renewable Energy Unit at DG ENER of the European Commission, to the panel discussion.

You can view the [draft agenda here](#), and register [here](#) before Monday 14 September, 17:00.

## PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD

### **Roadmap on Regional State aid – new guidelines**

By 30 September 2020, the European Commission will launch a consultation on the draft revised EU guidelines on regional aid. The EU's regional aid guidelines aim to promote the economic development of less favoured regions in the EU whilst maintaining a level playing field. The draft revision takes up the preliminary conclusions of the ongoing screening of the existing state aid rules. The draft will take into account the investment needs linked to the objectives of the Green Deal, the industrial strategy and the digital strategy, as well as the consequences of the coronavirus crisis. It includes inter alia an increase in maximum aid intensities and simplification of procedures for aid in areas of fair transition. For more information, please consult the following [page](#).

### **Valdis Dombrovskis to become EU Trade Commissioner**

Valdis Dombrovskis, European Commission Executive Vice President for an Economy that Works for People, will take over the Trade portfolio within the European Commission. Dombrovskis has served as acting Trade Commissioner since the resignation of Phil Hogan last month. He will thus play a key role in the negotiations for a trade agreement between the EU and the UK. He will also deal with the EU's trade relations with the US and China. Dombrovskis has been in the Commission since 2014 and was in charge of Social Dialogue between 2014 and 2019.

Mairead McGuinness, MEP since 2004 and Vice-President of the European Parliament, has been put forward by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen to replace Mr Hogan as Irish Commissioner and take over the Financial Stability, Financial Services and the Capital Markets Union portfolio. Both will have to go through a confirmation hearing at the European Parliament in the coming weeks.

## **NEWS FROM CEEP MEMBERS**

### **Join AquaFlanders (CEEP Benelux) at the Cycl'eau Lille 2020**

The registration for the event focussing on water management are still open. You can register to attend on 30 September and 1 October with the following links: