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3-001

**СРЯДА 13 ЯНУАРИ 2010 Г.
MIÉRCOLES 13 DE ENERO DE 2010
STŘEDA, 13. LEDNA 2010
ONSDAG DEN 13. JANUAR 2010
MITTWOCH, 13. JANUAR 2010
KOLMAPÄEV, 13. JAANUAR 2010
TETARTH 13 IANOYAPIOY 2010
WEDNESDAY, 13 JANUARY 2010
MERCREDI 13 JANVIER 2010
BRUXELLES**

**COMMISSION EMPLOI ET AFFAIRES
SOCIALES**

**AUDITION DE M. LASZLO ANDOR
COMMISSAIRE DESIGNE**

**EMPLOI, AFFAIRES SOCIALES ET
INTEGRATION**

**MERCOLEDI' 13 GENNAIO 2010
TREŠDIENA, 2010. GADA 13. JANVĀRIS
2010 M. SAUSIO 13 D., TREČIADIENIS
2010. JANUÁR 13., SZERDA
L-ERBGHA, 13 TA' JANNAR 2010
WOENSDAG 13 JANUARI 2010
ŚRODA, 13 STYCZNIA 2010
QUARTA-FEIRA, 13 DE JANEIRO DE 2010
MIERCURI 13 IANUARIE 2010
STREDA 13. JANUÁRA 2010
SREDA, 13. JANUAR 2010
KESKIVIIKKO 13. TAMMIKUUTA 2010
ONSDAGEN DEN 13 JANUARI 2010**

3-002

PRÉSIDENCE DE MME PERVENCHE BERÈS*(La réunion est ouverte à 13h05)*

3-003

La Présidente. – Chers collègues, je vous demande de prendre place et j'ouvre cette première réunion de la commission de l'emploi et des affaires sociales de l'année 2010. Indépendamment des sujets importants que nous avons à traiter aujourd'hui, je tiens à souhaiter à tous les membres de cette commission, à nos collaborateurs, aux fonctionnaires qui nous assistent dans nos travaux et à tous les observateurs qui les suivent également une très chaleureuse et très bonne année pour eux-mêmes et toute leur famille.

Nous sommes aujourd'hui réunis pour entendre le commissaire désigné en charge des affaires sociales et de l'emploi, M. László Andor, que j'accueille dans cette commission pour la première fois – j'espère que ce ne sera pas la dernière –, et je rappelle simplement quelques règles de procédure pour que chacun les ait en tête.

Pour commencer, le commissaire a répondu aux questions que nous lui avons posées dans le cadre général défini. Ses réponses aux questions ont été distribuées aux collègues dans toutes les langues de l'Union; l'évaluation qui en a été faite par le secrétariat, qui a été distribuée aux membres, est une évaluation critique, exigeante, comme l'esprit parlementaire le requiert.

L'exercice, vous le connaissez. Le commissaire aura dix minutes pour introduire nos travaux. Puis le temps de parole sera réparti, d'abord avec une prise de parole par chaque responsable de groupe politique au sein de notre commission. Ensuite, il y aura un tour de table selon la règle d'Hondt et, à la fin de l'exercice, nous donnerons la parole à des collègues qui nous ont rejoints, de la commission des droits de la femme et de l'égalité des genres et de la commission de la culture et de l'éducation. Ce sont des commissions dites "participantes".

Dans l'interrogation proprement dite du commissaire, chaque parlementaire aura une minute stricte – vous me connaissez – pour poser la question; le commissaire aura alors deux minutes pour répondre, et l'auteur de la question aura la possibilité de revenir sur le même sujet, sans poser de nouvelle question, pour rebondir sur la réponse du commissaire en une minute, auquel cas le commissaire pourra à nouveau donner une réponse, cette fois-ci en une minute.

À la fin, après les questions posées par la commission "femmes" pendant quinze minutes et la commission "culture" pendant dix minutes, je redonnerai la parole au commissaire pour une brève conclusion.

Voilà, Monsieur le Commissaire, votre curriculum vitæ ainsi que votre déclaration d'intérêts ont été distribués à

tous les membres, et ils sont donc parfaitement prêts à vous entendre. Je vous donne à présent la parole pour vos dix minutes d'intervention. Vous avez, je crois, une petite horloge devant vous, mais si jamais vous deviez déborder, je serais, malheureusement, obligée de vous couper. Vous avez la parole.

3-004

László Andor, Biztosjelölt. – Hölgyeim és Uraim, Tisztelt Képviselők!

Nagy megtiszteltetés számomra, hogy az Európai Bizottság biztosjelöltjeként Önök előtt megjelenhetek. Mivel az Európai Parlament európai polgártársaink képviselőjének legfontosabb testülete, igen nagy felelősséget is jelent ez számomra.

Éppen 15 éve idén, hogy először járhattam az Európai Parlament épületében, egy nemzetközi konferencia résztvevőjeként. Akkor az egybegyűltek arra keresték a választ: megőrizhetők-e Európa szociális vívmányai, hogyan lehetne megerősíteni az Európai Unió szociális dimenzióját.

Ma ugyanezekre a kérdésekre kell keresnem a választ, de már egy jelentősen kibővült Unió polgáraként. Már nem mint egy nemzetközi kutatócsoport egyetlen, Unión kívüli tagja, hanem a foglalkoztatási és szociális terület irányítására felkért vezető.

Ahhoz a generációhoz tartozom, amelynek diákéveire esett a nagy kelet-európai átalakulás kezdete, s amelynek az Európai Unióhoz való csatlakozást ezen átalakulás szükséges és szükségszerű végállomásának tekintette mindig. Ugyanakkor azt is fontosnak tartottam, és szeretném hangsúlyozni most is, hogy egy olyan Unió tagjai és állampolgárai legyünk, amelynek alapvető céljai közé tartozik az állampolgárok jólétének előmozdítása. Ezt az Unióról szóló szerződés egyértelműen rögzíti, és én ezt a célt szeretném szolgálni az Európai Bizottság tagjaként.

3-005

I wish to outline my vision and approach to strengthening the social dimension of Europe's political agenda. This can only be done with your guidance, cooperation and support.

Dealing with unemployment and social challenges at European level has always been a complex task but, in the current crisis, it is simply daunting. This is why we must speak in simple terms at EU level, telling the truth frankly and boldly.

Europe is going through the deepest financial and economic crisis since the Great Depression. Unemployment and poverty are rising, affecting workers, job-seekers and families. It is the weakest who are bearing the brunt of the crisis: young people, older workers, retired people, people with disabilities, single parents, migrants and those living in deprived areas.

The recent turmoil has highlighted the strength of the European social model, cushioning workers against the worst, but in today's economic context the long-term sustainability of the social model is in question again.

That is why my first priority is to find a balanced way out of the crisis so we find ourselves in a stronger position than before.

Immediate action is required. Our greatest task must be to stop job losses and to get people into work.

Other challenges persist: ageing populations, fast-changing technologies, climate change and other environmental challenges, and the sustainability of our pension systems.

Stemming unemployment and creating strong, socially inclusive economies requires a comprehensive approach for the next 10 years. The EU 2020 strategy can provide that approach for the entire Union.

EU 2020 will be about getting the most out of the tools and partnerships we have, and building over the next years, with the European Parliament, the Council, the social partners and my colleagues in the Commission, a stronger social dimension of our European model – a Europe that is fairer, more sustainable and more participative.

Fairer: by creating greater employment opportunities for all, by offering access to education and training, by prohibiting discrimination, including at the workplace, by safeguarding health and safety at work, and by supporting the provision of accessible, affordable and high-quality social services.

By a more sustainable Europe I mean actively managing the labour market to move steadily towards a low-carbon, smarter economy and creation of green jobs – here, new skills for new jobs will be vital; encouraging and creating the right environment for active ageing; and taking the flexicurity approach to focus on employment security rather than job security and improve job transitions to new skills and life-long learning.

By a more participative Europe I mean stepping up our work in coordinating Member State action in the social fields through the open method of coordination on social inclusion and social protection; fostering social dialogue as foreseen in the Lisbon Treaty; encouraging socially responsible management of industrial change, including the promotion of corporate social responsibility; and encouraging the establishment of European Works Councils.

To do all that will require the support of economic and monetary policy, of industrial policy and education policy. This is why I will be cooperating closely with my fellow Commissioners.

Turning the vision of a fairer, more sustainable and more participatory Europe into reality is possible if we

confront the issues wisely and courageously, using and linking up all the instruments we have.

First we have policy instruments. The Commission has an important role in facilitating broad-based consultation and coordination on social policy and employment. We can support this with data, analysis and leadership towards consensus.

We also have a new capacity to engage in the global dialogue in the social field. This includes projecting the EU's social values externally, notably through the decent work agenda.

Secondly, we have legislation in the labour and social areas. This, I believe, can be strengthened. Existing directives must be properly transposed and implemented. We will also have to look at areas like protecting workers from new risks at work and areas connected with increasing mobility. Any legislative initiative will require evidence-based social impact assessments, like on the revision of the Working Time Directive. We will also review the way the Posting of Workers Directive is interpreted and implemented.

Our third instrument comprises the various important financial levers at EU level, namely the European Social Fund, the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund and Progress.

The Microcredit Facility is in the pipeline, and I hope we can reach an agreement quickly.

The Commission has already made proposals to use the structural funds more flexibly and, for the future, I believe we must continue to look at ways to improve effectiveness, like how to get funds faster to where they are needed most, through simplification or better evaluation systems. This will be an important part of the discussion on the future of cohesion policy in 2011 and the budget review.

Ladies and gentlemen, success will depend on cooperation between interested parties, but it should not be about just striving for more growth and jobs. It also means working to improve the lives of the most vulnerable – for instance, the Roma. Not letting these people down is a matter of responsibility for society. It is about solidarity. Success will also mean working hand in hand with you in the European Parliament, with the Member States and social partners and civil society.

Over the next five years I intend to work in close cooperation with you, honourable Members, and with the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs in particular. The European Parliament is the cornerstone of our democratic legacy. Combating social inequality and exclusion also means fighting various forms of discrimination, that is why I welcome here the members of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and the Committee on Culture and Education and I envisage future dialogue with them as well.

I pledge to put my skills, experience and commitment at the service of the European Union. I will use them to the best of my ability, with courage and devotion to serve our common European ideals and, in particular, to strengthen social cohesion.

It is especially gratifying to me that my proposed portfolio should focus so clearly on people, on their health, their work and well-being, for people are what Europe is ultimately all about – and we forget this at our peril.

The economic crisis is an enormous challenge. But I believe it offers us Europeans the opportunity to strive for better societies. This is how I intend to look at the portfolio.

Honourable Members, Chair, thank you for your attention and interest.

3-006

Csaba Öry (PPE). – Megkaptuk írásbeli válaszait, és az írásbeli válaszokban azt nyilatkozta, hogy egyik legfontosabb prioritásnak a foglalkoztatási helyzet javítását, új munkahelyek létrehozását tekinti. Azt is mondja, hogy az új integrált foglalkoztatási irányelvek részét képezik majd a 2020-as stratégiának, és hogy ebben a kérdésben egyeztetni kíván a Parlamenttel. Ez, ami itt le van írva a szövegben, nyilvánvalóan nem igaz. Nem lehet igaz, hisz a Parlamenttel egyeztetni a foglalkoztatási irányelvekről csak kodecziós, együtdöntési eljárás keretében lehet. Önök viszont februárban közzé fogják tenni, nyilatkozat formájában a tényeit az új foglalkoztatási elképzeléseknek. Ez tehát nem történt eddig meg, nem történhetett meg. Ha ez így történt, így történt. Most lehetősége van arra, hogy néhány konkrét és új elemet ismertessen velünk a foglalkoztatási politika megújítása tekintetében. Erre várom a választ.

3-007

László Andor, Biztosjelölt. – Az EU 2020-as program, azt gondolom, hogy a következő időszaknak valóban a legfontosabb feladata az új Bizottság számára, és egyetértek a képviselő úrral abban, hogy az erre szánt időt, az előkészítésre szánt időt újra kell valószínűleg gondolni. Ezt a programot, mivel a következő tíz évre tekint előre, valóban nagyon körültekintően és a parlamenti képviselők aktív bevonásával kell elkészíteni.

Eredendően természetesen ez a program kell, hogy szolgálja majd a válságból való kilábalást is, tehát egyszerre van rövidtávú jelentősége és hosszú távú is. Azt gondolom, hogy a Bizottságon belül széleskörű egyetértésre talál, hogy a foglalkoztatási dimenziót ebben a programban meg kell erősíteni. Vissza kell tekinteni azokra a tapasztalatokra, amelyek a korábbi gyakorlatból, korábbi programokból az Unió rendelkezésére állnak, különös tekintettel a lisszaboni programra, amely tíz évvel ezelőtt készült, és jelentős eredményeket is elért. Ugyanakkor a válság teljesen új megvilágításba helyez mindent. Tehát ha az időzítés kérdését helyezzük a középpontba, azt gondolom, hogy valóban nagyon fontos lenne egy realiztikus időzítést

megszabni ennek a programnak ahhoz, hogy valóban jelentős vállalásokat tudjunk tenni, és világos legyen, hogy milyen célokat milyen eszközökkel fogunk elérni.

3-008

Csaba Öry (PPE). – Örömmel hallom, hogy jelölt úr sem elégedett az előkészítés menetével. Az kevésbé tölt el örömmel, hogy a kérdésre nem kaptam választ, tehát semmilyen új elemről nem hallok a foglalkoztatási politika tekintetében, és az sem világos, hogy ez az elvi egyetértés azt jelenti-e, hogy netán kezdeményezné majd a biztosi testület előtt, hogy mielőtt a stratégiát közzéteszi a Bizottság, egyeztetne talán a Parlamenttel az erre megszabott és legális formákban.

3-009

László Andor, Biztosjelölt. – Azt mindenképpen ígérem tudom, hogy képviselni fogom egyrészt azt, hogy legyen egy reális időzítési program, másrészt, hogy ez adjon módot a parlamenti képviselők minél aktívabb, intenzívebb meghallgatására, bevonására. Az új elemek, azt gondolom, hogy elsősorban a tekintetben kell, hogy áthassák ezt a programot, amelyek az elmúlt időszak változásaiból fakadnak, konkrétan abból, hogy a válság súlyosabbá tette a foglalkoztatási kérdését, amit idegen szóval mainstreamingnek nevezünk. Azt gondolom, hogy a foglalkoztatási dimenzióknak minden egyes kitűzött területen meg kell majd jelennie. Hasonlóképpen át kell gondolni a foglalkoztatási oldalát azoknak az általános céloknak, amelyek a hosszú távú programot jellemzik, így például az ökológiai, környezetvédelmi kérdésekre adott válaszokat. Itt is szembe kell nézni azzal, hogy az milyen strukturális változásokat hoz, ennek mi a foglalkoztatási oldala, és ezt hogyan tudjuk majd menedzselni a következő időszakban.

3-010

Alejandro Cercas (S&D). – Bienvenido, señor Andor. Estoy seguro de que hoy empezamos una nueva etapa de colaboración, donde vamos a intentar eliminar las inquietudes que hay sobre el rumbo del modelo social europeo entre nosotros y entre los ciudadanos que nos han escrito a nuestra página web y que plantean dos cuestiones que son cruciales.

Una es la Directiva sobre el desplazamiento de trabajadores. Después de las sentencias del Tribunal en los casos que han sido considerados, tenemos un problema con la interpretación, no solamente con la implementación de la Directiva. Están atacando y cuestionando derechos fundamentales de nuestra Carta y de la legislación de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo. Hay que actuar para eliminar las ambigüedades y las amenazas.

La segunda es la Directiva del tiempo de trabajo, que también ha conocido un desarrollo muy injusto en el último mandato y que afecta a la salud, a la seguridad y a la conciliación.

Mi pregunta es muy sencilla. El señor Barroso, el día 15 de septiembre, hizo una promesa de cambios sobre ambas cuestiones. ¿Puede usted concretarnos en qué va a

cambiar la Comisión en el futuro en cuanto a la Directiva de desplazamiento y a la Directiva del tiempo de trabajo?

3-011

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – Let me explain my approach to these two critical issues and particularly the posted workers' directives which you asked about first.

I think the origin of this legislation comes from two very important objectives. One of them is to facilitate mobility and the other one is to protect the workers, protect their rights.

I would agree that the fundamental problem in recent years, and you made reference to the Court judgments, is about the interpretation of these directives.

There have been some very complex, difficult cases and there are many cases that are not often discussed in this forum, but they create a problem when posted workers may end up in jail or there are very difficult disputes in which governments may be involved.

I think the first task should be to have a thorough social impact assessment and engage in social dialogue, involve the social partners and hear what their view on the subject is.

I think there is a need for a new approach on this matter, and maybe on other matters as well. By this I mean the directive on working time.

For the working time directive also, I think it is very important to have a thorough social impact assessment and leave time for the social partners to deal with the subject.

I am sure that on both sides they will make efforts to come to some form of understanding, but we also have to bear in mind the diversity of the European social model – it is better to speak about models.

We also have to bear in mind subsidiarity and I think it is very important to be realistic about the expectations.

3-012

Alejandro Cercas (S&D). – Señor Comisario, me complace mucho ver que incorpora el elemento de la evaluación social y que señala un nuevo rumbo.

Simplemente, para darle una nueva oportunidad: ¿estaría usted dispuesto a trabajar con los diputados para que la dimensión social y los derechos de los trabajadores se considerasen al mismo nivel que las libertades fundamentales de nuestro Tratado y que los elementos económicos de la unidad europea?

3-013

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – It is definitely my intention to work with you, and I am ready on every complicated issue – but also on simple issues – to come back to Parliament and discuss it with

individual Members if necessary, but also on a group level and with members of various parliamentary factions.

3-014

Marian Harkin (ALDE). – I have two questions. My first question is on your written response to Question 2, where you speak of the growing importance of globalisation and the ever more explicit linking of economic and social policies, both at European and national level. I would like you to elaborate on this a little – the explicit linking of economic and social policies, and what initiatives, if any, you might propose to pursue in this area.

My second question relates to carers, and family carers in particular. It is estimated that between one in every five or six workers also have care responsibilities for older or dependent relatives. I have two issues: first of all the exclusion of carers from the workforce because of their care responsibilities, and secondly the disadvantages experienced by carers, such as in flexibility of working arrangements etc.

I understand this is largely a matter for the Member States, but does the Commission intend to make any explicit reference to carers in any communications, and would there perhaps be any special initiatives under the Social Fund?

3-015

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – The impact of globalisation: we have to use all the instruments this portfolio has. In recent years the Globalisation Adjustment Fund has been established and the rules have been adjusted to the crisis circumstances.

I think it is possible to use this in case of major relocations whenever they cause major redundancies, not just redundancies in various Member States. I think this is clearly an area where the financial instruments of this portfolio can be used.

On the other hand, I think the new direction is to engage in an international – we can even say global – dialogue. As a result of the crisis, we now have the G20 structures, in which labour ministers will also be involved. The first event will take place in Washington in April.

I think in this global dialogue we have to find out what opportunities we have to represent European interests and to represent European values in the social area.

3-016

Marian Harkin (ALDE). – You mentioned the Globalisation Adjustment Fund. You may be aware that recently this committee in fact sent a letter to the Commissioner about some tensions in EU policy between...

(The Chair cut off the speaker.)

3-017

La Présidente. – Madame Harkin, je suis obligée de vous interrompre, parce que la règle est de ne poser

qu'une question et de rebondir sur la même question. Et vous en êtes à la troisième question.

3-018

Marian Harkin (ALDE). – Well, the Commissioner-designate referred to it. Nonetheless, if that is the case, I will agree with the Chair.

My supplementary question, then, will be on carers. In your response this morning when you spoke to us, you spoke about the sustainability of pension systems and the ageing population. I would hope that this is an issue you will include carers in, because many carers have to give up work and lose pension payments etc., so I would hope that that is an area that you would look at when you look at the sustainability of pension systems.

3-019

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – Absolutely. The Green Paper, which is coming in the spring period, very soon, will also deal with this question from the pensions point of view.

I think we definitely have to see whether there is any experience with involving family carers in eligibility schemes.

3-020

Jean Lambert (Verts/ALE). – We welcome what you have said about mainstreaming employment, because my group is very concerned that we should have a Commissioner who is committed to the active inclusion of his own DG on Employment and Social Affairs in all relevant areas of policy. We are concerned about the gradual erosion, as we see it, of competences from this area.

We could cite various examples, such as health, or the economy, but, as you mentioned it, I will pick up on the one related to climate change and sustainable development, which also has targets for 2020.

This is going to require considerable change, not just in new technologies, but in moving from old polluting technologies to resource-efficient ones, and every worker becoming environmentally aware.

All the initiatives so far on this seem to have been taken by other parts of the Commission, not the employment and social affairs side of it.

How are you going to ensure a meaningful role for your position within the Commission to really champion some of these areas which have been moving to other parts of the Commission?

3-021

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – I think we have first of all to establish good cooperation between relevant Commissioners – not necessarily forming formal groups but establishing coordination, in this case on the issues which you have listed. It is definitely Connie Hedegaard and Mr Potočník who will be most relevant to work with.

I think that with them I can explore what we can do in the area of green jobs and how we can address these issues using the Social Fund.

I can imagine that we can find a financial instrument in this portfolio that would be able to support the change you spoke about.

3-022

Jean Lambert (Verts/ALE). – I would like to pick up on this, though. You are talking about not just formal ways, but we have had sort of inter-DG working groups in the past and I wonder whether you are going to be promoting those or other initiatives. If you have those working groups, how will we know when they are meeting? How do we know what has come out of them? What is the transparency dimension as well, so that we also know what you are doing?

3-023

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – I can repeat that I will be not just available, but ready to discuss whenever I see the services are making progress on the subjects that are of interest to Parliament.

I will regularly return to you on all these issues.

3-024

Gabriele Zimmer (GUE/NGL). – Wir befinden uns im Europäischen Jahr gegen Armut und soziale Ausgrenzung. Das Europaparlament hat im vergangenen Jahr einen Bericht zur Förderung der sozialen Integration und zur Bekämpfung der Armut einschließlich Kinderarmut in der EU verabschiedet. Darin wurde die Kommission aufgefordert, einen ausführlichen Bericht vorzulegen, ob die sozialen Sicherungssysteme in den Mitgliedstaaten Einkünfte oberhalb der Armutsgefährdungsschwelle von 60 % des nationalen Medianäquivalenzeinkommens vorsehen. Außerdem haben wir die Kommission aufgefordert, eine gemeinsame Methode zur Berechnung des Existenzminimums und der Lebenshaltungskosten einzuführen, sowie eingeklagt, dass es endlich ein verstärktes Benchmarking und eine stärkere Kontrolle im Rahmen der offenen Methode der Koordinierung geben soll – insbesondere zur Lebenssituation von Kindern.

Was wollen Sie als möglicher künftiger Kommissar tun, um dieser Forderung zu entsprechen und sie schnellstmöglich umzusetzen?

3-025

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – I think we have to use this year, which has been devoted to the issue of fighting poverty and exclusion, in order to raise awareness about poverty in general, but particularly about subjects where these problems are the most burning. I think child poverty is one of the most severe.

I think it is well known that, by the time a child reaches four or five, it is decided how the rest of his or her life will be lived. That is why, if someone at a very young age cannot receive adequate attention, an adequate

family environment or adequate social conditions, then the rest of his or her life will be very difficult.

I think what the Commission can do here is to represent these views. In an open method of coordination, I think we have to collect data and provide analysis for the Member States and help those where we think there are more serious problems. They definitely have good experience as well, and I think in an open coordination we have to try to make these good examples known and spread good practices and try to tell Member States to set targets.

I think the policy-making becomes serious when governments set targets for themselves, and this is what we have to encourage.

3-026

Gabriele Zimmer (GUE/NGL). – Meine Frage zielte ja vor allem darauf, inwieweit die Kommission bereit ist, dazu beizutragen, dass wir zu gemeinsamen sozialen Mindeststandards kommen bzw. Kriterien entwickeln, auf deren Grundlage deutlich wird, wann und wie sozialpolitisch interveniert werden muss. Angesichts des langen Winters, den wir jetzt haben, hat eine ganze Reihe von Organisationen darauf aufmerksam gemacht, dass die Energiearmut steigt und dass hier dringend Abhilfe geschaffen werden muss. Es gibt einen ganzen Katalog von Vorschlägen zum Kampf gegen Energiearmut. Werden Sie sich auch speziell mit diesem Thema befassen, und werden Sie über die Kommission konkrete Maßnahmen hierzu veranlassen?

3-027

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – I have not yet studied how energy is related to the issue of poverty, but I am sure that there are more fundamental problems in many regions.

I think the right approach, as you suggest, is to include the new items. I think there are many fundamental problems in several Member States, in many regions, with employment, schooling, access to health care, family care and other social policies. I think we have to have a broad view and I agree that we have to bring in all the new issues.

3-028

Roger Helmer (ECR). – Mr Andor, we in the Europe Conservatives Group are very concerned about the impact of EU employment policy on wage flexibility and labour mobility. We have seen a constant stream of EU rules which have the effect of adding to unit labour costs and decreasing mobility and flexibility. I am thinking especially of the Working Time Directive, the Agency Workers Directive and also the current proposals for pregnant workers but, frankly, the list is endless. With your background in economics, you will understand that increasing the price of labour reduces the demand for it and increases unemployment. What will you do as Employment Commissioner to remove these burdens on European economies? What will you do to increase subsidiarity in employment law?

We are also concerned about the Globalisation Adjustment Fund. It is too small to have a significant impact, and the funding seems to go largely to administration and consultants. In some cases it merely moves jobs from one Member State to another, as in the Dell case in Ireland. How will you resolve this problem?

3-029

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – Concerning regulation in general, I do not think it is about putting burden on businesses. I think it is about protecting workers and improving social conditions and addressing health and safety issues. These are very important and, even if on most issues of employment policy and social policy we have subsidiarity in the Member States, the governments are responsible and they need to pay attention on a European level.

I am an economist, but I do not see labour like other commodities. I think when we discuss the price of cars, the price of books, the price of furniture that there is much greater room for the free movement of the prices as compared to discussing the price of labour because then it is about the income of the people, then we speak about the livelihood of families, so we have to distinguish when we speak about the price of labour and the income of the people.

Concerning the Globalisation Fund, this is a relatively new instrument. I think we have to collect and digest all the experience and evidence if you find, perhaps, anomalies. In general, I think this fund has been a good innovation and it has been very helpful in addressing the situation of people who have been made redundant. That is its objective and if the consultancy fees are excessive I agree with you that we will have to look at this matter seriously – but I would like to see the evidence first before forming a stronger opinion on that.

3-030

Roger Helmer (ECR). – You seem not to recognise that increasing the rights of those in work frequently has the knock-on effect of reducing the employment opportunities for those out of work and increasing unemployment. From your answer I judge that you are simply closing your mind to the realities of labour market dynamics.

We understand that you fiercely deny having been a member of the Communist Party, but you are the editor of a hard-Left journal, you oppose globalisation, you oppose market economics, you oppose NATO and, as it happens, you oppose the Maastricht criteria. Do you recognise that there will be a significant proportion of this Parliament who feel that those factors actually call into question your suitability for this appointment?

3-031

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – I am afraid the way you summed up my views is a kind of mis-portrayal and a gross exaggeration of views I represented at any time or that I represent now, and I think it quite misleading. I do not think that in one and a

half minutes I could address all the items, because they could be discussed separately.

3-032

Mara Bizzotto (EFD). – Signor Commissario, lei ha dichiarato che lavorerà affinché le iniziative della Commissione riflettano sempre i bisogni dei lavoratori.

Confesso che sono preoccupata per la totale assenza di considerazione da parte sua nei confronti delle problematiche legate all'immigrazione extracomunitaria nei paesi dell'Unione.

Lei parla tanto di occupazione, di povertà e di disagio sociale dei lavoratori, ma non sembra aver considerato il bisogno di porre un freno all'immigrazione, se non di azzerare le quote di immigrazione nei paesi dell'Unione europea, per dare la precedenza alle decine di milioni di europei che hanno perso il proprio posto di lavoro.

Lasciare le porte aperte, come fatto fino ad oggi in molte realtà nazionali, significa ignorare che dal punto di vista occupazionale non c'è posto per tutti e creare così le premesse per l'esplosione di insanabili conflitti sociali.

Qualche mese fa il Presidente Barroso, in un incontro che ebbe con il mio gruppo, disse che l'emigrazione è una risorsa per l'Europa. Io feci presente che non è così. Poiché sostanzialmente lui non mi rispose, vorrei sapere cosa pensa lei di questo.

3-033

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – I am clearly not a friend of the fortress concept. I believe that immigration should be seen as a complex problem in the context of the global economy, and not only seen as a problem but also as a resource.

You can see very often that the migration of people creates richer societies. Immigrants can bring new policies, new capacities and, in the history of humanity, there has always been immigration. Sometimes, or at certain times, it has created tension. But it is very important to see that there is definitely a positive side and a human side to it.

It is true that in recent experience, especially in countries where the immigration regime has been more liberal, there are now difficulties. The first generation – but also the second generation – cannot really integrate with mainstream society, and we have to pay more attention to this. That is why the President decided to place inclusion higher on the agenda and include it in the name of my proposed portfolio.

So, I will have to pay special attention to this but definitely not with the intention of exclusion. On these matters I will have to work out with Commissioner Malmström and Commissioner Reding to see how the legal and social side of these issues can be treated in a consistent way.

3-034

Mara Bizzotto (EFD). – Al di là di come la pensa lei, credo che serva una profonda revisione delle politiche migratorie e che non si debbano sottovalutare gli effetti sociali che questo potrebbe avere.

Vorrei farle un'altra domanda. Molte persone in difficoltà hanno trovato riparo dagli effetti della crisi grazie al sostegno offerto dal proprio nucleo familiare, grazie anche a un alto livello di risparmio privato e a un basso indebitamento al consumo. La crisi ha offerto un'ulteriore occasione per apprezzare quale rilevanza sociale possa avere la famiglia tradizionale, vero baluardo anche economico-sociale, affettivo e morale.

Quali azioni pensa di mettere in campo a sostegno della famiglia, vista l'importanza decisiva che questa può rivestire nel mitigare gli effetti della crisi economica?

3-035

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – I agree we have to pay attention to families.

I think this portfolio, in the short term, has very few instruments directly available for supporting families. What we can do is to work with the Member State governments and encourage them, and, if it is possible help them, to pay more attention to families and take care of larger families (with more than two children), since large families often increase the likelihood of getting into difficult social conditions.

3-036

Sari Essayah (PPE). – Mr Andor, to exit this financial crisis, we need a very concrete strategy to boost employment and the competitiveness of European companies. How do you see that flexicurity relates to the competitiveness of European companies? In your answer could you please also give your definition of flexicurity, because people understand it differently, and in your written answer you said that you support flexicurity if it is rightly interpreted. When is it rightly interpreted?

3-037

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – Flexicurity is a difficult term; for example, it is very difficult to translate properly into my language – it is not even possible. It is a combination of two concepts – flexibility and security – and it comes from the recognition that, if either of the two is over-emphasised, it is to the detriment of the broader objectives of employment and social protection. So we have to address these objectives simultaneously. But it does not mean – and that is why I spoke about the possible wrong interpretation – it definitely does not mean that it is or would be the responsibility of the individual. It is about how businesses are organised. It is about establishing better contact between business organisations and individuals.

That is why one of the key items here is more flexible contracts for employees, but also the other important item is life-long learning, to facilitate learning and the development of skills, repeatedly, for employees in order to help them to face new challenges or potential transitions in the later period.

There are further items in this box like, for example, active labour market policies, and we should also speak about the kind of social protection that surrounds the economy; how the unemployed are treated; what the unemployment-benefit schemes in various countries are. So I think the flexicurity approach has helped quite a few enterprises in recent times to pull through the crisis, because the dialogue and the organisation between the employees and the employers has been more adjustable to the new circumstances, and this is about avoiding losing the human capital and thus supporting competitiveness.

3-038

Sari Essayah (PPE). – Competitiveness and a growing economy is a very crucial issue when we are trying to boost employment. Do you agree on common economic approaches when boosting employment? For example, eurozone countries have to base their approach on Maastricht criteria and also the Stability and Growth Pact. Do you respect the common economic approach?

3-039

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – When we speak about cohesion in Europe, it is social, economic and territorial cohesion, and economic cohesion is what this question is about – how the common principles are applied. I think it is very important to have and maintain the common principles and the common rules, but we have to apply them in a responsible way.

What we have seen in the crisis is that the Commission made the right decisions concerning the Stability and Growth Pact when decisions were made about fiscal policies during the crisis period. So it is important to have common rules, but the application of the rules always has to respond to the actual circumstances.

Concerning the Maastricht criteria, again, this is a question of uniformity – whether these criteria, which were set out nearly 20 years ago, are applicable in all circumstances or not.

3-040

Sergio Gaetano Cofferati (S&D). – Signor Andor, lei ha affermato di voler contribuire con le sue deleghe alla realizzazione della strategia per l'Unione europea del 2020. È un'intenzione molto positiva.

Lei sa, perché ce lo ha ricordato anche poco fa, che uno dei temi prevalenti, effetto di questa drammatica crisi che l'Europa e molte economie del mondo stanno attraversando, è quello della disoccupazione di media e lunga durata, una disoccupazione rilevante in quantità e destinata a restare un tema non risolvibile nel breve periodo.

Volevo sapere se lei non ritiene utile che le politiche economiche dell'Unione e, in genere, le politiche che sono mirate a stimolare la creazione in quantità e qualità di nuova occupazione debbano essere assoggettate ad un sistema di incentivi e di sanzioni per poter essere efficaci.

3-041

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – Unemployment is indeed a severe problem now and it will remain with us despite our best efforts: that is true, but we have to try and change the unemployment patterns and, on the other side, we have to change the employment patterns, and we should not rethink our approach to full employment.

I think it is a long-term goal; we need to maintain the ideal of full employment but we have to find the best way to get out of the crisis, to minimise the impact of the crisis on employment and then how to address the problem of employment in countries where unemployment was already a major problem before the crisis. I think it is very important to see that in the 1980s and 1990s it was already a major problem. There had been several countries in the European Union that even in boom periods worked with unemployment at the level of 10% or more, and I think that this is a problem.

We have to find ways to reduce this level. Of course much of this is going to be done on a Member State level. But coordinating the employment policies should help to address this so we should not just focus on the European averages because there is great diversity. We have to have a differentiated view not just in terms of countries but also in terms of sectors and age groups.

3-042

Sergio Gaetano Cofferati (S&D). – L'obiettivo della piena occupazione, per essere realizzato, ha bisogno di una crescita economica costante e consistente e, perché sia un obiettivo credibile, ha bisogno di azioni concrete anche nel breve periodo. Per questo penso che la coesione sociale sia uno dei fondamenti di qualsiasi modello competitivo, in ragione della storia dell'Europa e delle condizioni attuali.

Lei ha una serie di deleghe che dovranno essere utilizzate insieme a quelle di altri Commissari. Non crede che sia utile qualche forma di coordinamento che coinvolga anche il Parlamento nell'utilizzo di queste deleghe, proprio per dare maggior efficacia all'azione di ciò che compete ai singoli Commissari ma che non è risolvibile, per l'obiettivo che ci si dà, semplicemente con l'azione e l'applicazione della delega ricevuta?

3-043

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – As I said in my introductory speech, I will have to work very closely with the commissioners responsible for industry and entrepreneurship, and economic and monetary affairs. I want to envisage cooperation with them and I would say that these are the three key portfolios which define the economic policy at a European level.

Concerning employment: the instruments and the capacity of my portfolio are definitely limited. It can mainly affect and address the supply side, and what happens on the demand side of the labour market largely depends on other portfolios. That is why I have to work with them very closely, and that is why I have to speak with Mr Tajani and Mr Rehn on how to boost

investment. So it is not just dreaming about growth; the higher rate of growth – two per cent, three per cent – seems to be a very ambitious target. But first we have to get there in order to speak about higher rates of economic growth. Then we have to see what we can do for more investment in Europe.

3-044

Ádám Kósa (PPE). – Közvetlenül hatályos az Európai Közösség 800/2008-as rendelete, mely a foglalkozik a fogyatékosokkal élőkkel, különös figyelemmel a kis- és közepes vállalkozásokra, hiszen ők foglalkoztatják a fogyatékosok többségét. Bizonyos korlátozásokat írnak elő anélkül, hogy garantálnák a mostani foglalkoztatási szintet. Az elmúlt hónapokban a pénzügyi válság és a bértámogatások 75%-os csökkentése súlyos válsághelyzetet teremtett, és kérdeztem Barroso urat is, illetve Almunia urat is, de azt mondták, hogy ez nemzeti hatáskörbe tartozik. Én, az 50 millió fogyatékosággal élő ember nevében vitatom ezt a választ. Tenniük kell ellene valamit, és kérdezem, hogy tervezi-e a jogszabály felülvizsgálatát, ha igen, akkor hogyan, ha pedig nem, akkor mit gondol, milyen lépéseket tervezne a foglalkoztatottság növelése érdekében?

3-045

László Andor, Biztosjelölt. – A jogszabály felülvizsgálatát egyelőre nem tervezem, és konkrét ígéretet nem tehetek, de szeretném jobban megvizsgálni a kérdést. Tehát azzal maximálisan egyetértek, hogy elfogadhatatlan, hogyha a gyengébb, kiszolgáltatottabb csoportokra, beleértve a fogyatékkal élőket is, hátrítják, akár kormányzati szinten, akár vállalkozói szinten a válságnak a következményeit. Azt gondolom, hogy ez elfogadhatatlan. Hogy ez vajon milyen mértékben a nemzeti tagállami kormányok hatásköre, vagy pedig az Európai Unióé, amennyiben az Unió általában véve foglalkozik az antidiszkrimináció kérdésével? Azt gondolom, mindenképpen van feladat uniós szinten, és mindenképpen együtt kell működni, konzultálni kell a tagállamokkal, hogy azt a gyakorlatot, amely sértés, méltánytalan, megszüntessék.

3-046

Ádám Kósa (PPE). – Szeretném hangsúlyozni, hogy 50 millió fogyatékkal élő ember él az Európai Unióban. Magyarországon és a kelet-európai országokban is 90%-uk nem dolgozik, tehát ekkora a munkanélküliség. Az európai átlag 40%, tehát én azt gondolom, hogy sürgető teendőkre van szükség. A kis- és közép-vállalkozások, hogy ha nem kapnak támogatást, akkor nem tudnak fogyatékkal élő embereket foglalkoztatni. Az én országomban például, Magyarországon, előírás van arra, hogy foglalkoztassanak fogyatékkal élő embereket, és hogy ha ezt nem teszik meg, akkor büntetésre számíthatnak. Más országokban, nyugat-európai országokban, inkább a munkahelyteremtést és a foglalkoztatást támogatják, és azon van hangsúly. Várom az Ön álláspontját a tekintetben, hogy melyik megoldást tartja szerencsésebbnek.

3-047

László Andor, Biztosjelölt. – Valószínűleg mind a két irány fontos, függően attól, hogy mik az adott ország lehetőségei, és adott esetben milyen korábbi

tapasztalatokra lehet építeni. Tehát általában véve nem lehet a szociálpolitikában vagy foglalkoztatáspolitikában nagyon nagy ugrásokat tenni, de azt gondolom, hogy az adott kontextusban kell mindenkitől, minden országtól, minden kormánytól elvárni, hogy jobban teljesítsen, hogy jobb megoldásokat vezessen be a korábbiakhoz képest. Ez a szakadék, amelyről a képviselő úr beszélt, ez valóban túl nagy, egészen biztos, hogy a megnevezett országgal szemben komoly elvárásokat kellene támasztani.

3-048

Frédéric Daerden (S&D). – En cette année européenne de lutte contre la pauvreté, cela a été rappelé, les objectifs politiques pour la réduction de la pauvreté doivent être définis à tous les niveaux, notamment pour supprimer les formes extrêmes de pauvreté et pour casser le cycle de sa transmission entre générations.

En la matière, vous avez évoqué l'importance d'une méthode ouverte de coordination plus visible et efficace pour l'inclusion sociale. De manière plus précise, quel sera votre mode d'action dans deux domaines: tout d'abord l'inclusion sociale des Roms évoquée par vous; concrètement, comment allez-vous poursuivre le travail de votre prédécesseur sur cette question brûlante? Deuxièmement, la pauvreté infantile: malgré les promesses de lutte contre ce phénomène, elle reste importante. Il est maintenant grand temps d'établir une recommandation sur la pauvreté infantile.

Sur la base des informations que j'ai, la Présidence belge a la volonté de soutenir cette idée. Peut-on compter sur votre soutien? Enfin, est-il dans votre intention de produire une directive-cadre sur les services d'intérêt général, qui sera un outil précieux face à ces dangers?

3-049

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – The first question about the Roma: I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor, Commissioner Špidla. I think it has been a major achievement to bring the Roma question to the European level.

Obviously, this has become a more visible issue than before, with enlargement, but I would like to stress that this is not only a social problem for the so-called new Member States, although there is a higher Roma population in some Member States. But it has become an all-European, transnational question, and we have to address it this way, with a strategic approach. There is already very good work by the services, in a coordinated way, which is led by DG Employment and, working with Mrs Reding, we should give greater visibility and coordinate this work at the political level. I think we can also see whether there are more resources at European level to assist the programmes of the Member States for greater inclusion and social integration.

Since I have already discussed child poverty, I would just like to connect the two questions. In countries like Hungary – where I come from – for example, the two problems significantly overlap, and I am aware that the Belgian Presidency is preparing significant work on

child poverty, so I will be ready to work with them on this.

3-050

Frédéric Daerden (S&D). – Monsieur le Commissaire, je vous remercie de vos réponses. Peut-être en complément, concernant l'inclusion sociale, pensez-vous que des objectifs, des recommandations en matière de revenu minimum à l'intention des États membres pourraient être envisageables?

3-051

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – I think we have to work on minimum incomes, so it is not a question of where I can kind of improvise, a very quick question. We know that in certain countries there is minimum-wage legislation; we need to see the experience of these, and also of those where they do not have this type of legislation, because this is a matter of Member State policies, and we have to respect subsidiarity when we at the same time try to introduce higher standards.

3-052

Elizabeth Lynne (ALDE). – Trade union membership is decreasing across the whole of the EU at the moment. Do you believe that those who are not in a Union are fairly represented within the decision-making process, and do you agree that there should be an equal right to join or not to join a trade union, and that the interests of the non-unionised are equal to workers within trade unions? An example of that, of course, is the Working Time Directive, which we have just worked on in the last mandate. The trade unions claim that the opt-out should go, and that it was down to workers' rights. You touched on that before. But many workers, whether they are unionised or not, want to do voluntary overtime. I would like to know your views on whether overtime is something that you would agree that workers have a right to do.

3-053

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – I think opt-outs are, in general terms, never the best solution. We always have to think first of rules that can be, or in principle could be, applied in every country. But if there is some kind of fundamental obstacle to applying an overall European regulation in a given country, yes, there is a possibility of opting out, perhaps temporarily.

We also have to consider the time dimension when we think about these issues and face the difficult negotiations. This should not, however, affect fundamental rights. If it is about the right to join a trade union or the treatment of union members or non-unionised workers, I think it is an issue of fundamental rights and that is more important.

As regards voluntary overtime, this is really an issue that needs to be looked into. I am not sure that a general conclusion could be reached. My approach is that, if it is voluntary in a certain period, within the broader context of the Working Time Directive, we should still find ways to protect the workers on the grounds of health and safety considerations. So I think we should give room to

voluntary arrangements which exceed the regulations, with certain conditions.

3-054

Elizabeth Lynne (ALDE). – You know that the unpublished draft report from the Commission states that there are now 14 Member States using the opt-out. Many of the Member States that are leading calls for the opt-out to go are those that use the loose definition of 'autonomous worker'; they use 'multiple contracts'. Do you see that as an abuse?

Another question really is a follow-up to the stalemate on the Working Time Directive. Do you see that there is a possibility of maybe taking this health sector separately and coming forward with further proposals on the Working Time Directive, just looking specifically at the health sector and no other sector?

3-055

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – I fully agree that when we bring back the Working Time Directive we have to have a new approach, and the sectoral approach could be one of the new aspects.

Obviously we have to learn from the difficulties of the previous attempts to review the Working Time Directive. The opt-out in itself is not an abuse. I think the fact of the opt-out is a reflection of different realities in different Member States, and we have to take that into account when the next discussion comes on the subject.

3-056

Regina Bastos (PPE). – Senhor Comissário indigitado, como é sabido, o desemprego jovem na União Europeia sofreu um forte aumento no último ano. Cinco milhões de jovens europeus estão desempregados.

Em Outubro passado o Parlamento Europeu aprovou uma emenda que foi apresentada pelos eurodeputados portugueses do PPE e que foi inserida no orçamento comunitário para este ano. Esta emenda propõe a criação de um Erasmus Primeiro Emprego, que seria um programa semelhante ao Erasmus, mas para quem está à procura do primeiro emprego. Assim, neste sentido, a minha pergunta é a seguinte: se o Sr. Comissário Andor sabe da existência deste projecto e, se conhece este projecto, se está disposto a criar este programa Erasmus Primeiro Emprego e quais as medidas concretas que tenciona tomar para fazer face ao fenómeno do desemprego dos jovens e à criação, por outro lado, dos empregos dirigidos aos jovens?

3-057

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – I do not yet know this programme, I only know the Erasmus programme which has been used in higher education, but I would like to learn about it. I think that this could be a very good example of working together between Parliament and the Commission. I am definitely interested in specific proposals.

Obviously, initiating is ultimately the job of the Commission, but I think this is something I would need to look into, because the issue of youth unemployment is

very severe, reaching 35% in certain countries for example. It is very high as a result of the crisis, and it threatens us with having a lost generation as a consequence of the crisis.

If such proposals help us, not just to avoid the worst, but to have good solutions, I am sure this portfolio will support them. We have the Social Fund, which may be used for such purposes.

3-058

Regina Bastos (PPE). – Muito obrigada, Sr. Comissário designado. Tenho pena que não tenha conhecimento deste programa que, aliás, mereceu a aprovação e uma rubrica no orçamento comunitário para este ano. Espero que rapidamente tenha conhecimento dele e gostaria de acrescentar outra questão que é preocupante em relação ao desemprego jovem. Há muitos jovens que ainda não acederam sequer ao primeiro emprego e que por isso, nos Estados-Membros, não têm direito ao subsídio de desemprego, porque nunca tiveram oportunidade de ter o seu primeiro emprego. Que recomendações daria aos Estados-Membros para estes casos de injustiça social?

3-059

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – What we can support and what we have to support is programmes of the Member States to try to provide employment for these excluded communities, because if these exist in certain localities – the most disadvantaged regions within certain countries – they need specific targeted programmes. There is good experience in certain Member States: good experimental work to address these mainly rural areas. The Social Fund is there but, if a Member State comes forward with a good suggestion, then we can fund this.

3-060

Danuta Jazłowiecka (PPE). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Panie Komisarzu desygnowany! W swoim wystąpieniu dużo i mocno podkreślił Pan obecną sytuację, w jakiej się znaleźliśmy. Mam świadomość, że zabiegając o stanowisko komisarza ds. zatrudnienia i spraw społecznych, wie Pan, że oczekujemy dzisiaj na tym stanowisku wizjonera, który w pierwszych dniach swojego urzędowania rozpocznie swoją działalność, nie będzie się uczył dopiero. Stąd poprosiłabym o konkretną odpowiedź na moje pytanie.

By móc realizować swoją politykę społeczną, musi Pan wykorzystywać różnego rodzaju instrumenty. Jednym z takich instrumentów jest Fundusz Społeczny. Fundusz, który tworzony był kilkanaście lat temu, który nawet na czasy sprzed kryzysu nie zdaje egzaminu, bo bardzo miernie jest wykorzystywany na dzień dzisiejszy. Jak zamierza Pan zmodernizować ten fundusz? I czy, podobnie jak obecny komisarz, planuje Pan wykluczyć Fundusz Społeczny z polityki spójności?

I drugie moje pytanie: W jaki sposób zamierza Pan udrożnić Fundusz Dostosowania do Globalizacji?

3-061

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – The Social Fund is part of – and, I think, a very important element of – the cohesion policy. Cohesion is a broad concept; we speak about social, economic and territorial

cohesion, and this is a pillar of social cohesion and in my view it will remain so. There are possibilities for better regulation, more autonomous regulation of the Social Fund. But I do not think it could be or should be separated from the concept of cohesion.

The Fund could also be modernised. It is possible that new innovative solutions could be introduced such as, for example, financial engineering. There is already experience and there are possibilities of working with the European Investment Bank to learn from good experience. I think the various programmes which have been established in recent years, like JASPERS and JESSICA, have provided good experience on how to bring together various sources of finance and various types of finance. The reason I am mentioning this is because we often create a sharp separation between the market economy and segments of the economy which are funded from redistribution. I think we have to avoid that. I think the key is that, even if certain activities, even if certain parts of the economy need to be funded from public sources, there has to be a link and a chance that those who are temporarily funded from public sources come back to the mainstream market economy.

3-062

Danuta Jazłowiecka (PPE). – Panie Komisarzu desygnowany! Przyznam, że wciąż brakuje mi tego wizjonerstwa, wciąż brakuje mi tej pewności, że głosząc za Panem, będę wiedziała, że od razu tego pierwszego dnia wie Pan, co robić, ponieważ inżynieria finansowa, o której Pan mówi, to jest tylko techniczne rozwiązanie. Brakuje mi jakichś propozycji merytorycznych z Pana strony.

Cieszę się ogromnie, że podkreślił Pan, że nie zamierza Pan tego funduszu wykluczać z polityki spójności, ale brakuje mi również odniesienia do rynków pracy. Tak naprawdę ten fundusz dzisiaj pracuje na małą grupę, która podnosi swoją jakość życia, grupę, która jest wnioskodawcami. Natomiast ostateczni beneficjenci z tego nie korzystają, a już w najmniejszym stopniu korzysta z tego rynek pracy. Jak to zamierza Pan zmienić?

3-063

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – I am not sure that I fully understand the question. I think it is clear that about nine or ten million people are supported by the Social Fund. This is and remains a significant instrument and I gave an indication about how its modernisation could be perceived. Of course it is not the first day. The first day is the first period of the Commission which has to be devoted to the EU 2020 and obviously employment and the instruments of this portfolio will also be touched upon.

3-064

Jutta Steinruck (S&D). – Sehr geehrter Herr Andor! In Ihrer schriftlichen Vorstellung benennen Sie als eines der wichtigsten Handlungsfelder die Bewältigung der Wirtschafts- und Finanzkrise. Mit welchen Maßnahmen sollten Ihrer Meinung nach die Mitgliedstaaten ihre Haushalte in Ordnung bringen? Kann das ohne weitere Arbeitsplatzverluste und ohne weitere negative Folgen

für die Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmer geschehen?

Außerdem gab es durch die Finanzkrise in einigen europäischen Ländern Einbußen bei den Renten. Was werden Sie dafür tun, dass Renten in Europa sicherer werden?

3-065

László Andor, *Commissioner-designate*. – The experience of various Member States is diverse in terms of the impact of the crisis on the fiscal situation and also on social security and pensions in particular.

First of all, for me, the personal question would be how to cooperate with Olli Rehn and Mr Tajani on the exit strategy. It is not an individual challenge, obviously, for me, how to take care of the course of employment in the exit period, it is a collegial question – a question of cooperation – and, honestly, it is primarily not mine: primarily it is on the table of Mr Rehn, how he coordinates the macroeconomic policies in individual Member States, especially where the crisis resulted in excessive deficit.

It is going to be, in my view, a very careful process. I think there is no reason to rush. I think all the support measures that have been created and introduced in the last two years in order to prevent a free fall of the economy and prevent the rise of unemployment have to be withdrawn in a very slow manner, and governments have to be given time and advice for doing this with not just one eye but with both eyes on the situation of employment.

The pensions systems suffered in some countries - not in all countries - but it is true that there are countries where it only the real but the nominal value of the pensions was reduced as a result of the crisis response. There is going to be work...

(The Chair cut off the speaker.)

3-066

Jutta Steinruck (S&D). – In der vergangenen Wahlperiode – um auf das Thema Rente noch einmal zurückzukommen – gab es ja keine Einigung bei der Übertragbarkeit von Rentenansprüchen. Wollen Sie dieses Thema neu aufgreifen?

3-067

László Andor, *Commissioner-designate*. – The portability of the pensions is clearly an issue which is connected not to one but to several fundamental issues of society and the labour market. Mobility is one and the other one is ageing, so there is going to be a new green paper on pensions soon, and this will be a starting point for returning to the question and setting a timetable which will address this. We are planning to focus on active ageing and there will also be a possibility to address related issues, but, yes, I think the issue of portability is one we will have to come back to.

3-068

Emilie Turunen (Verts/ALE). – In light of your rather weak answer – excuse me for that – before on youth unemployment, allow me to return to this point. As I see it, this is one of the greatest challenges for the EU right now, and, if we do not manage to tackle it, we will probably end up losing a generation. Bearing in mind that labour market policy is to a large extent decided at national level, which concrete steps can and will you, as Commissioner-designate, take to ensure that the problem is tackled and coordinated at EU level? Which policy and finance measures do you plan to bring forward in your new job?

3-069

László Andor, *Commissioner-designate*. – The policy measures have to be brought forward by the Member State governments, particularly because you need to consider the great diversity of experience in this area. I fully agree that youth unemployment is a major question, but not in every country. In the majority of countries, yes, we have to help those with greater youth employment crises by providing data and analyses, and recommendations on the basis of the experience of those countries where this has been resolved better.

It is also connected to education; probably there is a deficit in education and training opportunities in these countries. That is why they should understand that they are risking not just short-term social problems but also long-term structural problems when they do not address it sufficiently. We offer support, financial support.

3-070

Emilie Turunen (Verts/ALE). – Financial support, OK – I think I cannot see your vision on this entirely clearly, and we would need an Employment Commissioner with great creativity, with a strong social inclination and the willingness to really move forward, because this is a new situation for us and we have very few tools, and those we have, we need to use together.

So I would like to test some concrete ideas with you. Would you be willing to set up a special youth task force? Would you be willing to earmark EU funding for employment initiatives targeting young people? Would you work for securing not only more jobs but also quality jobs for young people? I am looking for concrete steps here, Mr Andor.

3-071

László Andor, *Commissioner-designate*. – I am ready to consider all these suggestions. I think it is also part of the duty of the services to make suggestions, but also I am happy if it is as a result of dialogue with Parliament that we can create an agenda. I think that this is going to be discussed with other commissioners as well, but I think the possibilities that you mentioned, like a youth task force and earmarking funds, are definitely something we can look into.

3-072

Thomas Mann (PPE). – Frau Vorsitzende! Herr Kandidat Andor! Am 1. Mai 2011 – es bleibt nicht mehr viel Zeit bis dahin – endet die Einschränkung der Arbeitnehmerfreizügigkeit. Wir haben in Europa etwas

Gutes gefunden, und zwar Übergangsregelungen, mit denen wir sehr flexibel sein konnten. Auf der einen Seite, in den alten Mitgliedstaaten, gab es eine große Akzeptanz für die Erweiterung der EU, und auf der anderen Seite, in den neuen Mitgliedstaaten, gab es eine Menge Ausnahmegenehmigungen, damit eines vermieden wurde: eine hermetische Abschottung der Arbeitsmärkte. Dieses differenzierte Instrument fällt künftig weg, und zwar in etwas über einem Jahr. Aber wir haben das noch nicht kommuniziert. In vielen Mitgliedstaaten gibt es völliges Unwissen darüber. Was macht denn die Europäische Kommission? Was werden Sie spezifisch leisten, damit wir bei ohnehin angespannten Arbeitsmärkten keinen Anpassungsschock erleben und damit ein Braindrain in die Länder mit einem hohen Lohnniveau verhindert werden kann?

3-073

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – I always had the view – and in the period of EU accession I always looked into the relevant surveys – that, actually, the fear of mobility within the enlarged European Union was always excessive, and actually the propensity of moving from one country to another for better or better-paying jobs was mostly overestimated. I think in the next period we have to see the end of the temporary arrangements with a few Member States, and we will see complete freedom of movement for workers. If it brings any tension, we will have to look at the evidence. But I think the evidence we have is that this is working according to expectations and that countries where workers come from the so-called new Member States benefit a lot from these employees.

3-074

Thomas Mann (PPE). – Ja, ein bisschen vage war das schon, Herr Kommissar. Vielleicht können wir es ein wenig konkreter machen? Ein Element der Einschränkung der Freizügigkeit in vielen Mitgliedstaaten war die Schwarzarbeit, die Schattenarbeit. Schattenarbeit nimmt den Arbeitnehmern die Rechte und den sozialen Schutz, raubt dem Mittelstand die Zukunft und den Mitgliedstaaten eine Menge an steuerlichen Einnahmen. Kommissar Špidla hatte zum Beispiel gesagt, er wolle die Mitgliedstaaten zwingen, härtere Kontrollen etwa auf Baustellen zu lockern, er sehe das als eine ungerechtfertigte Einschränkung der Freizügigkeit an. Teilen Sie seine Ansicht? Würden auch Sie Mitgliedstaaten verklagen, wenn sie Instrumente anwenden, um den Missbrauch der Freizügigkeit zu verhindern?

3-075

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – I am not sure if I fully understand the question. It may be a translation problem. I think it is true that because of mobility we have to look into the social security, how it is issued and how it is provided to employees going from one country to the other. I will have to have evidence from a social impact assessment about how this is all working before coming up with any new initiatives in this area.

3-076

Liisa Jaakonsaari (S&D). – We all know that the patterns of people's lives and especially their working

lives have changed dramatically during the past decade. This has caused insecurity and poverty, even among those people who are at work. My question is, Mr Andor, could you please give us concrete confidence-building measures to fight against precarious work and poverty on the labour market? What would be your next steps for a new flexicurity strategy in the European Union?

3-077

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – The problem of the working poor is not necessary connected with flexicurity. I think it is, more importantly, the issue of precarious jobs, where we have segmented labour markets and, in various countries, a large number of working people in uncertain jobs without sufficient rights guaranteed. So first of all we have to look into the possibilities for reducing the share of the precarious market. Of course there is benefit in that, there is a plus which accompanies certain atypical arrangements, but overall it is true that people are more exposed to uncertainty, and this should be dealt with when we continue our dialogue with the Member States.

3-078

Liisa Jaakonsaari (S&D). – Mr Olli Rehn and you mentioned earlier the nowadays very famous words: green, intelligent growth. Could you please elaborate a little bit? What do you mean by that?

3-079

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – The concept of green, intelligent jobs comes from the intention to look at the structural change resulting from climate change positively, and to have a positive vision about it, not to see it just as a cost, just as a burden, but to see it as an opportunity to develop environmentally friendly and low-carbon jobs.

It is particularly about a few sectors like the energy and construction sectors for example. Heavy industry is also affected, where it is obvious that the transition towards the low-carbon economy will require downsizing of the activities which produce excessive carbon dioxide and harm the environment beyond the acceptable limits. We need to address this through training. We need to address this through specific targeted programmes to employees involved in this sector.

(The Chair cut off the speaker.)

3-080

Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL). – On constate une nouvelle augmentation des profits en bourse de la part des grandes entreprises et des banques et, en même temps, on nous annonce de véritables catastrophes en matière de chômage. Voilà pourquoi je vous demande, d'une part, si vous seriez d'accord pour que nous élaborions ensemble une directive qui permettrait de donner des pouvoirs supplémentaires aux comités de groupe pour bloquer les plans de licenciement dès lors que les entreprises font des profits et, d'autre part, si vous seriez-vous d'accord d'avoir, au lieu d'une directive d'augmentation du temps de travail, une directive

incitant à la réduction du temps de travail pour favoriser l'emploi?

3-081

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – We have to be very careful using the word ‘directives’ when it is new initiatives. We have to be open, however, to new initiatives to spread better practices. If the corporate sector becomes stronger because the crisis seems to be over in certain sectors, that is good news. The way we have to work with them is to apply our principles and try to generate a recovery that also generates jobs. The big threat is the jobless recovery – not the recovery but the joblessness. The fact is that, even if industries become profitable again, there is a certain period when it comes from productivity and growth and does not necessarily result in hiring more employees.

3-082

Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL). – Justement, Monsieur le Commissaire, c'est bien ce que je critique, c'est que la crise n'est pas pour tout le monde en ce moment. Certains font beaucoup de profits, refont des marges, alors qu'on jette des travailleurs à la rue. Ma question portait donc sur les dispositions qu'on donne aux comités de groupe européen pour bloquer ces plans de licenciement et pour réduire le temps de travail.

3-083

Lajos Bokros (ECR). – A jelölt úr pontosan tudja, hogy Európa számos országában a kormányzati közigazgatás úgy van meghatározva, hogy a munkaügyek és a szociális ügyek együtt vannak. Ez azért érdekes, mert a két terület, a foglalkoztatás és a szociális politika legalább annyira ellentmondásba tud kerülni egymással, mint amennyire adott esetben ez a két terület kiegészíti egymást. A szociálpolitikának lehet olyan hatása, hogy a meglévő munkahelyeket védi, és ellene hat az új munkahelyek teremtésének. De lehet fordítva is. Azt szeretném kérdezni a jelölt úrtól, hogy hogyan látja ennek a keveredésnek a megoldási lehetőségét. Elsősorban természetesen az Európai Unió szintjén, mert itt is sem a szociális alap, sem a globalizációs alap nem válogatja szét ezeket az eszközöket, márpedig akkor lesz munkahelyteremtés, hogyha a szociálpolitika erősíti, nem pedig gyengíti a munkaerőpiacot.

3-084

László Andor, Biztosjelölt. – Azt gondolom, hogy alapjában véve ez egy jó kombináció, és fontos is egymással összhangban, egy házban tartani a munkaügyeket, a foglalkoztatáspolitikát és a szociális ügyeket. Igaz lehet bizonyos esetekben, hogy amennyiben bizonyos munkaügyi szabályozások, vagy szociális elvárások nem megfelelően vannak kalibrálva, akkor az valóban vezethet foglalkoztatási nehézségekhez. De alapjában véve, és makroszinten azt gondolom, hogy ez nem igaz, tehát önmagában nem lehet. Rengeteg olyan példa van, ahol azt látjuk, hogy egy kiterjedt szociális rendszer egy nagyon intenzív, átfogó jóléti gondoskodás primán működik, alacsony munkanélküliséggel. Ez annak köszönhető, hogy sikerül megvalósítani a produktív összhangot a kettő között, tehát nem egyszerűen költségnek tekinteni azokat a kiadásokat, amelyek a szociális védelemből fakadnak és

a vállalkozókra nehezednek, hanem ezt az emberi tőkébe való beruházásnak kell tekinteni, és el lehet tolni egy jobb minőségű foglalkoztatás felé. Azt gondolom, hogy a szociális szabályozás fontos feladata, hogy ne a költségekkel versenyezzenek, a munkaerőköltségek lenyomásával versenyezzenek a vállalkozások, hanem fektessenek be az emberi tőkébe és így próbáljanak magasabb hozzáadott értéket elérni.

3-085

Lajos Bokros (ECR). – Egyetértek a jelölt úrral annyiban, hogy a munkaerő minősége legalább annyira fontos, mint annak az ára. Azzal is egyetértek, hogy vannak az Európai Unióban kiváló példák arra, hogy a munkaerő minőségébe történő befektetés a legjobb eszköze a foglalkoztatás bővítésének. Csakhogy ez nem mindenkire tud kiterjedni, ráadásul az oktatáspolitikát az nem szociálpolitika. Globálisan ennek más a hatása, mert hogy ha meggondoljuk azt, hogy éppen a szakképzetlen munkaerő szenved legjobban attól, hogy Indiába, Kínába elmennek az állások, akkor nagyon nagy kérdés az, hogy vajon nem szociális eszközökkel, tehát oktatáspolitikai eszközökkel, vagy éppen szociális eszközökkel kell ezt a problémát kezelni, ráadásul olyan körülmények között, amikor a világ jólétét növeli, hogy az indiai és a kínai munkás többet keres.

3-086

László Andor, Biztosjelölt. – Az, hogy a szakképzetlenek sok esetben szenvednek attól, hogy elmennek a munkahelyek Indiába a globalizáció következtében, valóban igényel aktív munkaerőpiaci beavatkozást, és azt gondolom, hogy pont ez mutat rá arra, hogy segíteni kell, hogy lehetőségük legyen ezeknek az embereknek szakképzettséghez jutni és elhelyezkedni új állásokban, amelyet a gazdasági szerkezetváltás létrehoz.

3-087

Jean-Luc Bennahmias (ALDE). – Monsieur le Commissaire, j'ai bien noté dans vos déclarations précédentes que vous entendez engager une réflexion sur les services publics et sociaux, et je m'en félicite. Il est en effet très important que la Commission rénove son approche du sujet car, jusqu'à présent, les doutes, les incertitudes et les craintes perdurent.

Premièrement, s'agissant des services sociaux d'intérêt général, et plus généralement des services d'intérêt général, plusieurs attentes méritent une réponse rapide. Tout d'abord, la publication, par la Commission, d'un aide-mémoire pour l'application du protocole sur les services publics; ensuite, et surtout, l'adoption d'une directive fixant le statut des services d'intérêt général européens.

Deuxièmement, s'agissant des services sociaux qui pourraient faire l'objet d'un marché, comment pensez-vous aider l'économie sociale à consolider et développer sa position? Entendez par économie sociale l'ensemble des acteurs marchands qui exercent à but non lucratif pour le bien collectif.

Par exemple, concrètement, êtes-vous prêt à vous battre pour que la Commission relance enfin le processus législatif concernant le statut des mutuelles et des associations européennes?

3-088

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – Two sectors have been mentioned: the social services and the social economy, and since they are both social they could be mixed up, but they should not. I think the adequate framework to handle the social services from the Commission's point of view is to provide a quality framework. It is important to apply and develop common principles, but we have to consider the diversity of Member States, which might be at different levels of economic development. There is a great diversity in this respect, but we can work towards a quality framework to ensure accessibility, quality and affordability in this respect.

The social economy is something I would like to look at with a fresh eye in the coming period. My personal conviction is that this sector should be supported. I think it is partly about job creation, but it is also about supporting social values – corporations and communities that try to address their own lives in this way.

3-089

Jean-Luc Bennahmias (ALDE). – Je pense que je n'ai pas encore été assez précis. Cette commission et le Parlement européen ont régulièrement travaillé...

(La Présidente invite l'orateur à s'exprimer plus lentement)

Je vais essayer de ralentir mon débit, mais c'est très difficile. Donc, je répète, je crois que nous attendons d'un certain nombre de députés européens, quelle qu'en soit la nationalité, cette directive sur les services d'intérêt général visant à savoir ce qui est permis sur le mode de financement, par rapport aux modes de financement public et privé.

Un certain nombre de personnes ici, de collègues qui étaient déjà élus dans la dernière mandature, ont travaillé régulièrement sur des résolutions, des propositions de directive, notamment M. Cercas et d'autres, et ainsi de suite. Je crois qu'un gros travail a été fait et je ne vous ai pas entendu répondre là-dessus, malheureusement.

J'ai parlé assez lentement, Madame la Présidente?

(Rires)

3-090

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – On this question I will have to work with the Commissioner for the Internal Market, and my contribution can be to look at the social dimension and the objectives which I listed in my previous answer – affordability, accessibility and providing quality – but it is fundamentally an internal market dossier.

3-091

Pascale Gruny (PPE). – Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, il serait utile que la Commission européenne enquête sur l'émergence de nouveaux risques liés à la santé et à la sécurité au travail. Et je voudrais savoir ce que compte faire la Commission en ce sens concrètement. Plus précisément, concernant les troubles musculo-squelettiques en plein développement, qui représentent désormais, statistiquement, les deux tiers des maladies professionnelles déclarées dans certains pays, quelles seront les mesures proposées? Cette question était une priorité définie dans sa stratégie communautaire sur la santé et la sécurité au travail entre 2007 et 2013. Mais que s'est-il passé depuis lors? Alors que la stratégie communautaire arrive à mi-parcours cette année et fera l'objet d'échanges sous la Présidence espagnole, il faut se poser la question d'une intervention communautaire en la matière. Quelles mesures concrètes proposez-vous pour pallier ce problème dans les lieux de travail et dans quel délai?

3-092

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – This is clearly my intention, to accelerate the work in this area and then bring forward new legislation.

There is clearly an increase in new types of illnesses like musculoskeletal illnesses – of which, I may mention in a footnote, I am also a sufferer – which are largely due to the new types of office work and the ICT technology being introduced in offices.

It is a huge problem, and I am aware of the costs which this brings about, which are in the range of hundreds of billions, so the issue is partly about helping the affected people, and partly about reducing the resulting cost.

To cut a long story short, I would like to see a quite tight deadline. I think in this year we will have to make progress on one or two items, and obviously I will need the support of Parliament to make it happen.

3-093

Pascale Gruny (PPE). – Je vous remercie mais je n'entends pas les mesures concrètes que vous souhaitez nous proposer. Vous avez parlé des maladies et de coûts, mais en fait quelles mesures allez-vous proposer? Parce que derrière ces maladies, ce sont des licenciements. On parle beaucoup de licenciements économiques mais, malheureusement, on a des licenciements pour inaptitude. Et forcément, derrière, les travailleurs ne retrouvent plus de travail. Il y a les formations, l'accompagnement peut-être des entreprises aux nouveaux postes de travail et la recherche aussi au niveau des machines, des bureaux, etc. Je n'entends donc pas les mesures concrètes de votre proposition, surtout si vous comptez la mettre en place très rapidement.

3-094

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – The original question was about health problems at the workplace, and I think I answered that about musculoskeletal illnesses.

There is also another item which is on the table concerning tobacco smoke, which is a far more complicated question. This is something where, I think, the problem is very serious. The difference is that, in this case, the diversity of the national environment should be taken more seriously, but I think the subject needs to be studied.

The accelerated agenda which I spoke about particularly applies to musculoskeletal illnesses and the MR issue.

3-095

Kinga Göncz (S&D). – Szívesen kérdeznék még román élethelyzetének javításával kapcsolatban, most mégis egy másik irányba indulnék el a kérdéseimmel. Örültem annak, hogy említette Andor úr azt, hogy a foglalkoztatás horizontális irányelvként legyen jelen a döntéshozatalban, mert tudjuk, hogy a válság után gyorsabban javulnak a makrogazdasági mutatók, és ettől elmarad a foglalkoztatás javulása. De konkrét intézkedésekre is szükség van. Egy konkrét programmal kapcsolatban kérdezném a véleményét, ez pedig a mikrofinanszírozási eszköz, amiről a Parlament éppen most december végén szavazott. Érdekelne, hogy látja, milyen társadalmi csoportok, kik számára jelentene ez segítséget egyrésztől, másrésztől, hogy milyen tényezőkre kell majd ügyelni a Bizottságnak a program megvalósítása során.

3-096

László Andor, Biztosjelölt. – A mikrofinanszírozás lényege, a fő ok, ami miatt fontos volt ezt napirendre tűzni és európai szinten érdemes volt ezzel foglalkozni, s örülök, hogy ez már nagyon közel van a megoldáshoz, az az, hogy a pénzügyi szektor az eddigi állapotában nagyon sok országban nem volt képes választ adni az alacsonyabb jövedelmű munkanélküli emberek, a hátrányos helyzetű térségek problémáira és főleg nem tudta segíteni azt, hogy a munkavállalók vagy a munkanélküliek vállalkozóvá tudjanak válni, a kisvállalkozások vagy a mikrovállalkozások megfelelő formában hitelhez tudjanak jutni. Tehát ez az új kezdeményezés, azt gondolom, hogy hathatós segítséget tud nyújtani ahhoz, hogy ezen a téren változás történjen, létrejöjjenek ilyen mikrohitel-intézmények olyan országokban, ahol még nincsenek, illetőleg ahol vannak, ott forrást tudjanak nyújtani a lakosságnak.

3-097

Kinga Göncz (S&D). – Köszönöm szépen, és örülök, hogy fogja ezt támogatni. Valóban, most a tárgyalásoknak remélhetően az utolsó szakaszában tartunk a Bizottsággal és a Tanáccsal. Én azért is kérdeztem, mely társadalmi csoportok számára jelenthet ez segítséget, mely fölmerült a mai meghallgatás során a fogyatékosok nehéz helyzete, a román nehéz munkaerőpiaci helyzete, és én azt gondolom, hogy ezeken a területeken ez konkrét segítség lehet. Érdekelne még az, hogy van-e más olyan jó gyakorlat valamelyik tagállam krízis kapcsán hozott intézkedései között, amelyet kiemelten jónak tart, és amit szeretne szélesebb körben látni az európai uniós tagországok között, s ahol Ön is tud segíteni azon, hogy ezek elterjedjenek.

3-098

László Andor, Biztosjelölt. – Konkrétan a mikrohitelvezés tekintetében most megmondom őszintén, hogy nem tudok improvizálni, hogy hol van a legjobb gyakorlat. Azt tudom, hogy jó intézmények működnek Franciaországban, Spanyolországban és vannak országok, ahol ez igazából nem létezik, például Magyarország. Ugyanakkor elterjedtek azok a gyakorlatok, amelyek tulajdonképpen a kriminalitás határát súrolják, például uzsorarendszer a legnehezebben élő, sok esetben sokszorosan hátrányos helyzetű csoportok keretében. Tehát azt gondolom, hogy van tapasztalat, amit át lehet venni, vannak kezdeményezések. Tulajdonképpen már a válság előtt sok kezdeményezés volt a mikrohitel-intézményrendszer fejlesztésére. De nyilván most a források elapadtak, és azt gondolom, hogy ez indokolta elsősorban, hogy európai szinten foglalkozzunk a kérdéssel, és segítsük azokat, akik próbálkoznak megoldásokkal.

3-099

David Casa (PPE). – Ninsab ftit inkwetat għaliex jidhri li d-domandi li ġew referuti għall-Kummissarju nominat, li huma għal qalbi ħafna, donnhom ingħataw risposta ġenerali. Fejn jidhlu, pereżempju, xogħol għal żgħazagh: bqajna mingħajr viżjoni, fejn nitkellmu dwar l-immigrazzjoni klandestina u x'impatt soċjali qed ikollha fuq l-Ewropa, jiddispijaci ni għidlek, ma għandekx idea ta' kemm hi gravi s-sitwazzjoni fis-sud tal-Ewropa. Id-domanda tiegħi hija relatata mal-povertà, speċjalment dak li għandu x'jaqsam mal-povertà tat-tfal. X'se tagħmel int biex issolvi din il-problema, illi hija gravi, hija gravi ħafna u 17% taċ-ċittadini Ewropej qegħdin jgħixu finqas livelli minn dik li tirrikjedi l-povertà nnifisha. Allura int x'se tagħmel biex issolvi immedjatament din il-problema gravi li għandna fl-Ewropa.

3-100

László Andor, Biztosjelölt. – A probléma valóban nagyon súlyos, a gyermekszegénységről beszélek most. Azt azonnal megoldani, azt gondolom, hogy ez egy irreális elvárás. Mindenképpen azonnal el kell kezdeni, illetőleg folytatni kell az eddigi munkát, amellyel az Európai Bizottság megpróbálja segíteni a tagállamokat ezeknek az égető szociális problémáknak a megoldásában. Ez nyilván egy válság idején sokkal nehezebb, de pont a válság idején lehet kiterjeszteni a szociális gondoskodást, és bevezetni új intézményeket. Például az előbb említett mikrohitelvezés is egy példa arra, hogy lehet a válság idején újítani, és új megoldásokat bevezetni. A Bizottság azt tudja tenni, hogy segít a tagállamoknak a lehetőségeket megismerni, segít új adatokkal, elemzésekkel és segít a Szociális Alap fölhasználásával, hogy az megfelelően működjön ezekre a célokra. De látni kell azt, hogy mi az amire ez a portfólió képes és látni kell azt, hogy mi az, amire nem képes.

3-101

David Casa (PPE). – Jiddispijaci però forsi ma kontx ċar jiena f'dak li tlabt. Nixtieq inkun naf kif se ssolvi jew x'se tippromponi inti bhala Kummissarju jekk tigi magħżul illum dwar miżuri li għandna b'żonn nadottaw biex insolvu l-problema tal-povertà. Dwar 'microfinancing'

ijen kont qed nistenna li inti tghidilna pereżempju minn fejn se jiġu, kif se tiġi fondata l-'Microfinance Facility', li inti ma tajtniex risposta dwarha - mhux lili imma lil kollegi oħra. Il-povertà hija problema reali. Noqogħdu nagħmlu ħafna kliem sabiħ illum naħseb li huwa tard wisq. Għandna problema llum u llum irridu azzjoni. Int bħala Kummissarju x'azzjoni konkreta ġdida qed tippromponi biex nilhqu l-livelli li suppost ilhaqna sal-2010 u sfortunatament dawn ma lhaqnihomx? Bhal pereżempju, l-"Active inclusion strategy" ta' Ottubru tal-2008. Int x'jidhirlek dwar il-proposti li saru u x'qed tippromponi ġdid, inti bħala Kummissarju nominat?

3-102

László Andor, Biztosjelölt. – Abszolút igaza van. Az a kérdés, hogy egy percben mit lehet megválaszolni ebből a kérdésből. Valóban, a szegénység okait kell először is megnézni, és azokat kezelni. Tehát a válság idején valóban a jövedelembiztonságot, a támogatási lehetőségeket kell kiterjeszteni. Ha hosszabb távon gondolkodunk, akkor az okokat kell megnézni, azt, hogy a szegény csoportok, azok, amelyek hátrányos helyzetben vannak, kirekesztettek, hogyan férnek hozzá munkahelyekhez, oktatáshoz, egészségügyi rendszerhez, hiszen nagyon sokszor ezeken múlik, ezek az eredendő okok, amelyből ki vannak zárva a szegények, és ezeken kell segíteni. Tehát ez egy komplex program. Mindazokkal együtt kell működni, akik az oktatás, az egészségügy területén a politikát meghatározzák, és el kell érni, hogy komoly célokat fogalmazzanak meg saját maguk számára nemzeti szinten.

3-103

Elisabeth Morin-Chartier (PPE). – Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, vous êtes chercheur, vos réponses ont souvent été superficielles, voire incantatoires, mais nous sommes élus par nos concitoyens européens et ces derniers attendent des politiques efficaces pour l'emploi. Concrètement, je voudrais vous poser quatre questions portant sur ce sujet afin de savoir ce que vous allez nous proposer. Comment d'abord lutter d'abord contre les ...

(La Présidente rappelle la règle concernant le nombre de questions)

Tout porte sur l'emploi, Madame la Présidente. Bien sûr, je connais la règle.

Comment lutter contre les sorties sans qualifications pour entrer dans l'emploi? Comment accélérer la validation d'acquis d'expérience pour s'adapter à l'emploi? Comment rendre le fonds d'ajustement à la mondialisation plus efficace pour rester dans l'emploi et comment intégrer quinze millions de handicapés dans l'emploi pour les insérer dans la société?

3-104

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – The four subjects listed require different approaches, and we have to combine the different instruments the portfolio has in a different way. I think this is not the start of the work in terms of providing better education and training and skills – it has been part of the Lisbon Agenda, and I think the progress needs to be recognised. Also, we have

the means to support national policies if the programmes to improve vocational training and skills are submitted. So I think it is obvious that it is a general answer, but the concrete details are worked out in the programmes at national level.

The Globalisation Adjustment Fund was also mentioned. This has a completely different, specific purpose. It is about addressing the consequences of major relocations from Europe to other parts of the world economy, but it also has to be directed to the people affected and help their training, help them to find new jobs, help them to use the available institutions of the labour market in the given country.

3-105

Elisabeth Morin-Chartier (PPE). – Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, nous ne sommes pas allés au fond du problème. Nous avons un vrai problème pour faire évoluer les politiques existantes pour que les travailleurs s'adaptent mieux aux nouveaux besoins des entreprises pour les maintenir dans l'emploi.

Et on voit bien que nous avons à faire évoluer, par des instruments différents, et nous avons à faire évoluer politiquement – comment, dans quel sens? –, ces politiques pour que les travailleurs restent dans l'emploi. C'est beaucoup plus difficile de faire revenir des travailleurs dans l'emploi que de les y maintenir.

Alors, comment voyez-vous les politiques qui nous permettent de maintenir les travailleurs dans leur emploi en les adaptant aux nouveaux besoins?

3-106

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – This may sound like a very general answer, but I think this is clearly where we have to speak about flexicurity and use this as a strategy not just for keeping jobs but for keeping employment in the long run. I can only repeat the importance of learning and developing skills; I can only repeat the commitment to social dialogue, which I think is crucial for flexible adjustment to the new challenges of the labour market and the global economy.

3-107

Stephen Hughes (S&D). – Occupational safety and health are an important part of your portfolio, but one that has been very much neglected in recent years.

I have liked what I have heard you say about musculoskeletal injuries, and I understand you will bring forward an amendment to remove the uncertainty surrounding the use of magnetic resonance equipment and an amendment to the directive on electromagnetic fields and waves.

But what other initiatives would you have in mind for a new health and safety action programme at European level? Are there new risks, for example? Risks related to work with nanoparticles? But there are also urgent needs to revisit existing legislation, for example the existing directive on display screen equipment does not even

mention the computer mouse, as it was not invented at the time we dealt with that directive.

So what would you have in mind as the content for a new action programme on health and safety?

3-108

László Andor, *Commissioner-designate*. – The new action programme, or the new approach, has to take into account most of the problems listed in the question.

There is the exposure to hazardous materials as well, for example, which is a very significant one. However, in this area there is also a problem of taking into account the scientific evidence on the subject. So for some questions, like tobacco, for example, the scientific evidence is obvious and the case can be made very clearly. For other issues there is still a need for time, like the electromagnetic issue. Also, what is even more difficult in this group and this agenda is hazardous materials, where I think the evidence is not obvious, and I cannot promise a very quick inclusion of this in the legislation.

3-109

Stephen Hughes (S&D). – It is refreshing to hear that you do have in mind an action programme with content for the future.

It will however be difficult, to say the least, to get an action programme on health and safety with content through the Barroso II College, I suspect.

I wonder what personal qualities you feel that you have that could help make that breakthrough and get an action programme with content.

3-110

László Andor, *Commissioner-designate*. – There are some issues where, partly, the personal commitment but also the legal situation is compelling. This is mentioning another piece of the legislation, which is the Working Time Directive, where it is clearly linked to health and safety causes. It is not only a function of individual approaches, it is also an issue where we have certain legal challenges: we have infringements, so we have a compelling case to revisit the item as one of the most urgent and highlighted items on this agenda.

3-111

La Présidente. – Nous en venons à trois questions qui vont être posées par nos collègues de la commission des droits de la femme et de l'égalité des genres. La première question sera posée, au nom du groupe PPE, par Mme Livia Járóka.

3-112

Livia Járóka (PPE). – I am going to speak in English to make sure that the translation is easier.

In today's hearing you have touched many times on the most vulnerable groups of the European Union, those who daily are facing multiple discrimination, those who find it hardest to overcome unemployment. For us in the

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality these are very important messages.

We would like to work on this with you further, as multiple discrimination in the EU road map for equality between women and men is very important. But I want to bring up another issue which is very relevant to your portfolio when we talk about the welfare system and those people who are living on the welfare system, those who are facing unemployment.

One of your counterparts, the Commissioner-designate of the Slovak state, Maroš Šefčovič said five years ago in 2005 that the Roma, who are one of the groups you have been talking extensively about here today, are only exploiters of the Slovak welfare system.

From what you are saying, your point of view is quite different to his. What I would like you to comment on is his view about this completely excluded group of people in the European Union. To what extent do you feel...

(The Chair cut off the speaker.)

3-113

László Andor, *Commissioner-designate*. – The way I see it, the Roma are a clearly disadvantaged group in predominantly five Member States, suffering not only from discrimination and prejudice, but also from lack of access to employment, health systems, proper housing and a series of other services, including education. A consequence of the complexity of these problems, and of this exclusion, is the way we now see the Roma population.

So definitely the view that has been cited in the question is not mine. I will have to speak with my fellow Commissioner-designate about it. We have to have a very detailed view when we prepare a new strategic approach on the Roma at European Union level.

I have already discussed this with Mrs Reding but I will also discuss it with other incoming Commissioners on education and health in order to line up complex measures in this area.

3-114

Livia Járóka (PPE). – If you allow me I would like to ask this from the point of view of being, unfortunately, the only Roma MEP in Parliament – though the number of the European Roma could allow for almost 20 MEPs. The reason I am asking you about this is because I think the sort of messages the Commission is showing are extremely important when it comes to the inclusion of those most disadvantaged.

I would like to know whether you can see a situation where we have Mr Maroš Šefčovič – responsible first of all as Vice-President of the European Commission, secondly responsible for interinstitutional relations and administrations – having views like this. To what extent can you do something about this? To what extent can you be a catalyst for a European Roma strategy in the

European Union, and how are you going to address these sorts of views in the Commission?

3-115

László Andor, *Commissioner-designate*. – Before commenting on any other Commissioner or anyone, I will have to speak with them, so I would not like to do that now. I think the important point here is to confirm that, from our point of view, we are speaking about not just a vulnerable group but probably one of the most vulnerable groups in Europe, which needs special attention at Member State level: targeted programmes at Member State level that help integration and inclusion, and we have to do our best – probably more so than in previous years – at EU level as well.

I know about, and I congratulate you on, your work in the previous cycle in this area. Also, Magda Kósáné Kovács had a significant report, so I think there is already a background which helps us to bring forward new initiatives in this area. And I would like to highlight the way Commissioner Špidla, in the previous period, handled this and elevated the subject.

3-116

Edite Estrela (S&D). – Sr. Comissário indigitado. Sou relatora para a revisão da directiva sobre a protecção das trabalhadoras grávidas, puérperas e lactantes, também conhecida como directiva sobre a licença de maternidade.

Vários Estados-Membros têm legislação sobre a licença de paternidade, mas tal não existe a nível europeu. No entanto, a partilha de responsabilidades entre homens e mulheres é um objectivo para se promover a igualdade de género e para a conciliação entre a vida familiar e a vida profissional.

A minha pergunta é: vai apoiar a minha proposta sobre a inclusão da licença de paternidade nesta Directiva 92/85?

3-117

László Andor, *Commissioner-designate*. – I am very supportive of the idea. I think it is very important that fathers become and remain engaged with their children and I am someone who has been practising this. I know that it is very often a problem that can be helped through paternity leave for fathers.

It does not necessarily have to be mandatory, so, before reaching any conclusion, we should see which various Member States already have good examples of this and see how it connects with the social systems and the regulations in various other countries. Again, this is something where we have to take into account the diversity and the subsidiarity principle.

3-118

Edite Estrela (S&D). – Deduzo das suas palavras que é favorável à existência de legislação europeia sobre licença de paternidade e, portanto, ou concorda com a inclusão desta proposta na Directiva 92/85 ou então a Comissão vai tomar iniciativa neste domínio. Se assim for, quando é que a Comissão vai tomar essa iniciativa?

3-119

László Andor, *Commissioner-designate*. – I would need to see the subject clause, but I would like to find the best approach and the best timing for this. I do not like to rush into commitments and deadlines, I am afraid.

3-120

Siiri Oviir (ALDE). – Proua juhataja, lugupeetud volinikukandidaat! Demokraatia pooldajana on lihtsalt võimatu leppida asjaoluga, et pool rahvastikust on alla surutud ja keerulisemas olukorras kui teine pool rahvastikust, ning seda kõigest naiseks olemise pärast. *De jure* on Euroopa Liidus viimase 40 aasta – kordan, 40 aastat! – jooksul vastu võetud meetrite jagu erinevaid otsuseid, erinevaid direktiive, erinevaid suuniseid. Nende juriidiline jõud on olnud erinev. Kõik soolise võrdõiguslikkuse vallas. Olen nõus, et õiguslike meetmeid võib ja peab tugevdama, aga see on asja üks külg. Tähtis on, et vastuvõetu *de facto* ka tagatakse ja et seda rakendatakse.

Minu küsimus tulebki sellest. Kui me vaatame naiste ja meeste palgavahet Euroopa Liidus ja mitte viimast võrdlust, mis on tehtud 2007. aasta (see oli majanduslikult hea aasta) andmete põhjal, vaid vaatame ka tagasi 5–10 aastat, siis näeme, et mitmetes riikides on tegelikult palgavahe suurenenud. Minu küsimus ongi: mida te võtate ette, et liikmesriigid hakkaksid täitma vastuvõetud otsuseid?

3-121

László Andor, *Commissioner-designate*. – I have to do everything in my power to get Member States to implement existing legislation. The problem is real, although in some aspects there has been progress in previous years. If we look especially at the question of the pay gap very carefully we see there is still a large pay gap – 17%-18%, very largely, on average – but in terms of, for example, labour market participation of women, we have made progress in Europe in the first decade of this century.

But the problems remain. I fully agree that the pay gap is still very large. We have to look at the experience of countries, particularly the Nordic countries, where the results are better and there are more women in leading positions. What I can do is help women, for example, with the change in the maternity leave regulation, to help women through becoming entrepreneurs and improving the rules and legislation on how women can become entrepreneurs. In general terms we have to keep mainstreaming the gender aspects. Whatever legislation comes we have to pay special attention to the gender dimension.

3-122

Siiri Oviir (ALDE). – Mul oleks täpsustav küsimus. Mu küsimuse sisu seisnes selles, et palgavahed mitmetes liikmesriikides suurenevad. Te nimetasite 17%, minu liikmesriigis – ma olen Eestist – on palgavahe 2007. aastal tõusnud 30,3%ni. Veel 5 aastat enne seda oli 22%. Mis tuleb majanduskriisi järgselt, täna ei tea. See tähendab, et liikmesriigis ei pöörata üldsegi tähelepanu nendele suunistele, otsustele, direktiividele, mis selles vallas on ette võetud. Ma olen ka Eesti Naisliidu

president ja naised küsivad, mida teeb Euroopa Komisjon, et need liikmesriigid, kus olukord halveneb, saaksid kutsutud korrale.

3-123

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – The 33% you mentioned is clearly by far the largest figure I have heard and we have to pay special attention to these great disparities. I think whether this is the result of the crisis or outside the context of the crisis that these special cases need to be addressed.

I said before that there is great diversity in Europe, and we have to look behind the averages. I have to confess I do not know the specific context of your country but I promise I will look into it and ask my services what the specific causes are, because having a figure which is double what is already a bad average really cries out for a solution.

If it is in any way connected with discrimination, obviously the Union has a strong role to play.

3-124

La Présidente. – Nous en venons aux deux questions de la commission de la culture, et la première sera posée par M. Georgios Papanikolaou, du groupe PPE.

3-125

Γεώργιος Παπανικολάου (PPE). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, κύριε υποψήφιε Επίτροπε, συζητήσαμε για την ανεργία στους νέους, για τη φτώχεια στους νέους. Όπως προκύπτει από τις μετρήσεις, τουλάχιστον ένας στους πέντε νέους αναφέρεται ότι ζει κοντά στα όρια της φτώχειας· η ανεργία στους νέους είναι διπλάσια από ό,τι στο σύνολο των εργαζομένων.

Παρ' όλα αυτά, όπως προκύπτει από πολλές προσεγγίσεις, δηλαδή και από την προσέγγιση της τυπικής εκπαίδευσης αλλά και της μη τυπικής εκπαίδευσης, οι νέοι σήμερα έχουν περισσότερα προσόντα από ό,τι στο παρελθόν.

Η κρίση δυσχεραίνει ακόμη περισσότερο την εύρεση εργασίας. Όταν τελικά όμως βρουν εργασία οι νέοι, συνήθως αυτή είναι κατώτερη των προσόντων που έχουν αποκτήσει και έτσι η επένδυση που έχουν κάνει στη γνώση δεν ανταποκρίνεται στις ανάγκες και στις προσδοκίες τους.

Το πρώτο, λοιπόν, ερώτημα που σας κάνω – και τελευταίο βεβαίως σ' αυτήν τη φάση – είναι: πώς σκοπεύετε να διευκολύνετε και να ενισχύσετε τις δομές προκειμένου η μετάβαση από τη γνώση στην αγορά εργασίας να είναι ευκολότερη και να ανταποκρίνεται στις προσδοκίες των νέων;

3-126

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – The New Skills for New Jobs agenda should play a major role in helping to develop the national systems and the labour markets, and also the training systems to address the problem you mention, namely the lack of proper skills among those young people who leave school and want to find proper employment.

I am sure it is to a large extent the responsibility of the education systems and the lack of adequate active labour market policies in those countries where we see the excessively high, sometimes shocking, figures of youth unemployment and youth poverty.

It is also true, and causes us to take a closer look this issue, that if ignored at a young age the problem becomes structural, and long-term unemployment may follow and long-term exclusion from society will bring a lot more costs.

So it makes sense: we have to use these reports and these expert works which the Commission has been working with and help the Member States to apply these lessons.

3-127

Γεώργιος Παπανικολάου (PPE). – Παρ' όλα τα προβλήματα που αναφέρετε και εσείς, οι νέοι, που έχουν κατά κοινή παραδοχή περισσότερα προσόντα από ό,τι στο παρελθόν, - επαναλαμβάνω, παρά τα προβλήματα - δεν έχουν τη δυνατότητα να βρουν σωστές προσβάσεις στην αγορά εργασίας ανάλογα με τα προσόντα αυτά.

Ο πιο πρόσφορος τρόπος για την πρώτη εργασιακή εμπειρία των νέων πλέον είναι τα προγράμματα πρακτικής άσκησης. Υπάρχουν όμως περιπτώσεις που και κατά τη διαδικασία αυτή, κατά την πρακτική άσκηση των νέων ανθρώπων, οι νέοι εργαζόμενοι που κάνουν την πρακτική άσκηση γίνονται αντικείμενο εκμετάλλευσης από τους εργοδότες και τελικά καλούνται να καλύψουν ανάγκες πολύ περισσότερες από αυτές τις οποίες έχουν ως αποστολή να εξυπηρετήσουν τα προγράμματα αυτά. Και αυτό συμβαίνει και στην Ελλάδα.

Σας ερωτώ: στις περιπτώσεις αυτές όπου τα προγράμματα πρακτικής άσκησης γίνονται, προσφέρονται και τελικά οδηγούν σε εκμετάλλευση των νέων ανθρώπων, θα κάνετε κάτι περισσότερο; Θα έχουμε περισσότερους ελέγχους; Θα λάβετε περισσότερα μέτρα;

3-128

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – The various schemes for apprentices and to have more apprentice programmes in countries have become part of the crisis response at Union level and also in Member States. The progress here is significant in terms of the number of jobs. If we find cases when the young people in these new jobs are unprotected or treated badly or not paid or, as you suggest, are not paid at all, that is a serious problem and we will have to find ways to intervene. On its own it is progress that the apprentice schemes have been introduced, and we have to investigate if any anomalies are observed.

3-129

Mary Honeyball (S&D). – Commissioner-designate, I would like to push you on this whole question of youth unemployment and what we can do about it. You will understand from the number of questions that have been asked here just how much feeling there is about it and

what a problem it is across the whole of the European Union. Some of this is undoubtedly due to qualifications. I would really like to follow up a little bit on the last question, and particularly with relation to higher education, where many graduates seem to be coming out of that process without relevant qualifications and then have to do additional vocational qualifications in some instances on top if that.

I would like to push you, too, on concrete solutions that we may find. We all deplore youth unemployment; we all deplore poverty, but what we are looking for is measures to actually improve the situation.

I would like to ask you: in what way do you think we can better align the skills that young people are obtaining so that they will lead to jobs, so that the skills they get will provide them with jobs, with the skills that they need for jobs? What would you do to promote and remove some of the stigma which still exists and is attached to certain forms of vocational training? I know that is true in the UK, and I am sure that it is true in other countries as well. And to ensure that the vocational qualifications can actually be transferred from one EU State to another.

3-130

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – First of all I would like to say that the European Social Fund will continue to support training activities, including modernisation in vocational education and training.

Secondly, I would like to mention the New Skills for New Jobs expert group, which will present recommendations for further implementation of this initiative. And in the spring of this year the Commission will adopt a communication which is meant to provide a new impetus for future EU cooperation in the area of vocational training and education, the so-called Copenhagen Process.

So this is also an issue which will be handled by the Belgian Presidency, when we will see a new communiqué for the strategic directions in the training and education area.

3-131

La Présidente. – Il nous reste du temps pour quelques questions complémentaires et, comme les choses sont très bien organisées, j'ai déjà une liste répondant toujours à la règle d'Hondt. Donc, en vertu de celle-ci, je donne la parole à M. Derek Clark, du groupe EFD.

3-132

Derek Roland Clark (EFD). – Mr Andor, you will be aware that a positive deluge of regulations and directives pours forth from this place, a great deal of it with an impact on the business world. Big businesses can largely cope – they have got the resources to employ compliance officers and the like – but small businesses cannot; they are struggling. Many of them are struggling very badly and that, of course, has a direct impact upon employment. Small businesses – I believe right across

the EU – employ around half the workforce, and it cannot be a good idea for them to be struggling.

So may I ask you please, what specific and significant plans have you got to reduce this burden upon the small businessman?

3-133

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – The SME sector is indeed crucial in job creation, and we need to support it from this point of view. There is a part of the Commission agenda which is reducing the unnecessary administrative burden and, in certain areas, simplification of regulation.

There is a high-level group, under the leadership of Mr Stoiber, which is working on this area to reduce the unnecessary administrative burden. But I have to draw attention to the fact that in this area the social type of regulation is relatively small, so it affects many other types of regulation that make life more difficult for small and medium entrepreneurs. But it is the social type of legislation – labour legislation – which is not really responsible for the majority of this; the figure I have is about 3%. We can have a look, but the impact from my side may be very minimal on this. But I can support the work of this group, and I will support the relevant conclusions on that.

3-134

Derek Roland Clark (EFD). – You mentioned the social impact and the social work, but of course the greatest social benefit anyone can have is to have a job. Otherwise you gave me no specifics.

Can I hark back to earlier in this meeting, when you mentioned several times the Working Time Directive? If I heard you right, you said that you had no plans to push it further in terms of reducing the opt-outs. So can I have it confirmed, please, that you would not seek to draw an end to the opt-out, to set a date for the end of opt-outs from the Working Time Directive?

3-135

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – What I said was to look at the subject with a new approach. I think that is what is needed, and perhaps the Working Time Directive could be put it into a new context.

First of all I would like to listen to the social partners. I would like to look at an impact assessment. I also said previously that in my view opt-outs are not necessarily the best solution in an economic and monetary union environment, but it is not my mission to commit myself to any deadline or a lack of deadline when we discuss the Working Time Directive today.

3-136

Tatjana Ždanoka (Verts/ALE). – Due to the crisis, some Member States have had to resort to the financial assistance of the European Union and the International Monetary Fund. In the mean time, those countries which used this assistance implemented very controversial measures in the social sphere – such as cutting pensions

and benefits in my country, Latvia, or reducing sick pay and reforming pensions in your country, Hungary.

Given that the crisis hits the most vulnerable groups of the population even harder, it is important that assistance measures also contribute to the reduction of poverty in beneficiary countries. Do you agree that social conditionality may become an integral part of any financial assistance and other stabilisation instruments? If you do agree, how are you going to ensure this conditionality?

3-137

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – The financial assistance was provided not simply by the European Union, but by the European Union together with the International Monetary Fund. I fully agree that perhaps the IMF conditionality could be looked at, and it should be developed with awareness of the social dimension and the social impact of the financial crisis, the liquidity crisis and the fiscal policies that respond to these crises in cases like the one we have now.

It has been very unfortunate that pensions were cut, but wages were also cut, and public-sector employees were put in a difficult situation in many cases in the countries we are speaking about.

This is a very harsh crisis. That is why I started my introduction by stressing this. We need to address the sources of the crisis itself. We have to develop the international financial structures and the institutions in order to avoid similar crises in the future.

But at the present time, yes, we do need to have targeted assistance to the groups which are affected by the pay cuts and the pension cuts. To my knowledge, both the European Union and the IMF have been supportive of these targeted schemes. We have to look at the experience and how it could be improved.

3-138

La Présidente. – Il nous reste encore un peu de temps pour des questions complémentaires et la prochaine sera posée au nom du groupe ALDE par Mme Nadja Hirsch.

3-139

Nadja Hirsch (ALDE). – Herr Kommissaranwärter, Sie haben auf die Fragen, die sich auf Institutionen – wie Gewerkschaften oder Betriebsrat – bezogen haben, relativ detailliert geantwortet, allerdings alle Fragen, die sich auf spezifische Arbeitnehmer – wie Jugendliche, Menschen mit Behinderungen – bezogen, bisher eher etwas ausweichender. Ich denke aber, dass Maßnahmen und Programme, die gerade diese Zielgruppen mit sehr unterschiedlichen Profilen an den Arbeitsmarkt zurückführen sollen, sehr spezifisch sein müssen, um eben genau hier Unterstützung zu geben. Einige dieser Bereiche, die sehr zielgruppenspezifisch sind, sind ja an Frau Viviane Reding, ihre zukünftige Kollegin, gegangen. Sehen Sie aber trotzdem, dass es Ihre Aufgabe ist, weiterhin sehr spezifisch auf Zielgruppen – ich nenne beispielsweise Kinder, Behinderte, Migranten, homosexuelle Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmer –

einzugehen, und wenn ja, können Sie vielleicht für ältere Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmer Maßnahmen vorschlagen, die sehr spezifisch sind?

3-140

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – Yes, I have to work with Viviane Reding on every area which is connected with discrimination and where related legislation has been made and when employment practices or social policies can concern fundamental rights. For the respective groups that have been mentioned – people living with disabilities, immigrant communities – we need to have targeted programmes and we need to ask the Member States to set targets for themselves in order to have more inclusive employment practices and in order to have more inclusive societies. It is not a programme that can be just invented in one day or two. I think these issues need to be integrated into the EU 2020 programme as well, so this is going to be one of the main questions in the spring period: how to highlight them in the long-term agenda.

3-141

Nadja Hirsch (ALDE). – Das heißt, für Sie ist das weiterhin ein wichtiger Bereich, den Sie also nicht komplett Frau Reding überlassen wollen?

3-142

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – We have to work together. All the anti-discriminatory elements of working with these groups will be covered by Mrs Reding, but the same groups are also assisted or covered by various social policies in this portfolio. So this requires cooperation, and that is what we will do.

3-143

Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE). – Mr Andor, I carefully listened to the questions and answers, and I did that with a very open mind. I would like to make one friendly remark. In almost all your answers you used the word 'we'. I would have liked you to say 'I' instead.

Let me come to the four main issues, as I think they are. First of all, the Action Plan on Health. It is the first competence of the European Union. What will you do with the first action plan, as asked by Stephen Hughes?

Then on mobility, as asked by Thomas Mann. What do you intend to do until 1 May?

Then the third one, on working time. I have to say that opt-out is never a solution.

The fourth one would be unemployment. We have unemployment guidelines. There are differences in Europe. In the Netherlands it is 3.7%; in Spain it is almost 18%. What do you intend to do, because the employment guidelines did not function? What do you intend? Please come up with your programme.

3-144

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – It is actually a summary of some issues which we have been discussing.

I think the programme is to mainstream the employment objectives. I think it is important to make it a dominant view in the College that employment and the social dimension need to be on the top of the agenda. We need economic growth, we need to come out of the crisis, and we need a strategy that takes all these issues very seriously and develops practical solutions.

That is the agenda of the coming period. I have discussed during the hearing a number of issues that are related to mobility. I already said that we will have a fresh look at the Working Time Directive, which you have again asked for, and it is inevitably a discussion that will come back later this year, after the social dialogue.

3-145

Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE). – What we had in the last years is – could I perhaps say it like this – a neoliberal influence on the social market economy, which we did not want in this committee. What we want you to do is to be a commissioner who really feels our problems and the problems of our societies and who – that is, you yourself – comes up with an action plan on all the issues I have already asked for.

3-146

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – I will have to come up with initiatives, but after using all the analytical capacities of the Commission and also after engaging in dialogue with all the stakeholders on the relevant subject.

On various issues we went through today I have highlighted what my orientation is, what my approach is, and for developing practical solutions I will make use of my services and also come back for dialogues and hear your views on the items you asked about.

3-147

Proinsias De Rossa (S&D). – You are very clearly a quiet man, and I suppose what we really want to know from you in your concluding remarks is whether or not you are going to fight for the principles and the policies that you have outlined here today, because you will find opposition in the Commission to what is being proposed, and we need to know that the Commissioner for Social Affairs is going to fight for the people of Europe.

Specifically I want to ask you about to the social dimension of external policies – the implementation, for instance, of the International Labour Organisation's core employment standards. I think there is a need to address the issue of corporate social responsibility and seriously consider the question of regulating in that area in order to try and bring some common global approach to these issues, because we cannot live as an isolated Union, but have to take into account the pressures we are under globally as well.

And therefore the social dimensions of our external policy are extremely important as well, but will you fight for them? That is the question.

(The Chair cut off the speaker.)

3-148

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – I will. It is definitely my intention to take these matters very seriously, but I need Parliament's support. I think without the support of Parliament we cannot make progress, we cannot improve the implementation of the existing legislation and we cannot come forward with new legislation.

So it is obvious that, when I refer to working together with other Commissioners, it is often a matter of debates first – having the dialogue on how to address the issues on economic policy, poverty, immigration or children better – but I will certainly be committed to the solutions which I think are best. I would like to see and to introduce visible progress in the next five years in all the areas which we have discussed.

3-149

Proinsias De Rossa (S&D). – Just very briefly, with regard to the corporate social responsibility question and the ILO core labour standards: will they be on your agenda?

3-150

László Andor, Commissioner-designate. – Both will be high on the agenda because of the enhanced international dimension of the work. Corporate social responsibility is clearly an issue where companies work not just in various countries but various continents, and they can make progress in terms of more ethical practices. This is part of the portfolio, and I will work with the ILO. I will encourage the Member States to adopt the ILO standards – which they mostly do – but I will look into the subject if there are any questions out there.

3-151

La Présidente. – Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, vous avez répondu à quarante questions de tous les groupes politiques, il vous reste cinq minutes pour conclure.

Je voudrais peut-être que vous utilisiez ces cinq minutes aussi pour nous dire l'état d'esprit de la coopération que vous envisagez, si vous êtes confirmé, avec les membres de cette commission et le Parlement européen. Vous l'avez évoqué tout au long de cette audition mais il est vrai que les membres de cette commission, les anciens et les nouveaux, ont une petite frustration à cet égard. Ils ont l'impression que, parfois, dans les négociations, notamment lorsque nous sommes en codécision, entre le Conseil et le Parlement européen, la Commission a privilégié l'un des deux codécideurs. Êtes-vous prêt à corriger ce travers que nous avons identifié? Peut-être est-ce une paranoïa institutionnelle, mais je ne crois pas que ce soit uniquement cela.

Et puis, beaucoup des membres de cette commission se disent que, dans le domaine social, au fond, il y a beaucoup de législation et qu'une des difficultés – c'est vrai dans d'autres secteurs, mais c'est sans doute aussi particulièrement vrai dans le domaine social – est que

cette législation est peu, pas ou mal mise en œuvre par les États membres. Or, la Commission possède dans ce domaine un outil, qui est celui de la procédure d'infraction contre tel ou tel État membre, dès lors qu'une situation deviendrait excessive au regard de la non-application ou de la mauvaise application de la législation.

Êtes-vous prêt à examiner dans quelles conditions cet outil pourrait être mieux utilisé par la Commission, pour que le droit que nous élaborons ici, avec beaucoup d'engagement et d'investissement, soit ensuite traduit dans la réalité, pour ne pas fabriquer une espèce de désespérance européenne, mais au contraire améliorer la situation de nos concitoyens?

Vous avez cinq minutes pour conclure et peut-être aussi pour répondre à ces deux éléments d'interpellation finale.

3-152

László Andor, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thank you very much for the opportunity first of all to present my approach and my ideas to the committee today.

I think the discussion highlighted that the crisis is hitting European society severely and this is a test for the European social model.

We have to think together and look for solutions together because these economic challenges will remain great and the key issues of my portfolio are all affected by the situation.

The Commission and Parliament in my view have to work in very close partnership in the next five years, and I think this very constructive debate should be seen as a starting point for that from my side.

We need a balanced way out of the crisis. We need to help people get back to work. We need to address the structural challenges that come from environmental issues, the energy sector, the education sector and fundamentally the overall macroeconomic policies.

The last one is probably going to be the most difficult. Some of my answers to the questions have been very general but I think it is very important now to have, first of all, a common understanding about my commitment to a social Europe and the importance of the social agenda in the EU 2020 framework.

Concerning the questions of the Chair: the point is that the Commission has to be a guardian of the Treaty and has to do everything in its power to enforce the existing legislation, and I will do that in my area – in the area of employment, social affairs and inclusion. This area now covers new aspects as well, with inclusion being more highlighted, and with green jobs being more topical than they were five or ten years before. I think, however, that the fundamental issues are the same – we have to remain committed to full employment, quality employment and social cohesion, and I hope that I have managed to

convince you that, personally, I am committed to these objectives.

3-153

La Présidente. – Merci beaucoup. Nous en venons au terme de ces trois heures d'audition et je donne rendez-vous aux coordinateurs pour la réunion d'évaluation de cette audition, qui aura lieu à 20 heures, dans la salle 1G2.

(Applaudissements)

(La réunion est levée à 16h10)