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EUROPE'S LOOMING DEMOGRAPHIC CRUNCH THE SEARCH FOR NEW LABOUR AND WELFARE POLICIES

A European Policy Summit organised by *Friends of Europe* in partnership with Swiss Life and Gallup with the support of Adecco, the European Confederation of Private Employment Agencies (Eurociett) and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EUROFOUND) with media partners *Europe's World* and EurActiv
Brussels, Bibliothèque Solvay, Thursday 31 January, 2008

PROGRAMME

08.30 – 09.00 Welcome coffee & Registration of participants

09.00 – 09.30 Keynote addresses – among others – by **Joaquin Almunia**, EU Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs

Session I

09.30 – 10.30

CAN TACTICAL POLICIES ADDRESS PROFOUNDLY STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS?

Long accustomed to unemployment figures as the barometer of political crisis, Europeans are having difficulty adjusting to the implications of their worsening labour shortage. Low birth rates and inadequate education and training in many high-tech sectors are already producing serious labour shortfalls. The economic impact is that western Europe (EU-15) will see its present 2.3% maximum annual GDP potential increase – in effect, the ceiling on growth – fall to 1.8% after 2010, and then to an average 1.3% after 2030. What does increasingly sluggish growth mean for Europe's most industrialized countries, and what policy measures are needed to soften the impact of our shrinking and ageing workforces? Is some sort of European fertility strategy conceivable?

Wolfgang Clement

Chairman at the Adecco Institute and former German Minister for Economics and Labour

Aart de Geus

Deputy Secretary General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Beverley Hughes

United Kingdom's Minister of State for Children, Young People and Families

José Silva Peneda MEP

Member of the European Parliament Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and rapporteur of "A European Social Model for the Future"

Co-moderated by **Shirin Wheeler**, EU Correspondent of the BBC World Service, and **Giles Merritt**, Secretary General of *Friends of Europe*

10.30 - 11.00 Coffee break

Session II

11.00 - 12.00

IS THE EU'S "FLEXICURITY" THE FIRST SIGN OF A WORKPLACE REVOLUTION?

The European Commission is breaking new ground with its "Flexicurity" proposals for combining greater job flexibility with more security for both employers and workers. Furthermore, EU Member States have recently endorsed the common principles of flexicurity. Public opinion accepts that 'jobs for life' are a thing of the past and life-long learning and new forms of work are crucial. But trade unions remain sceptical about the labour market reforms that flexicurity implies. How can active labour market policies help re-fashion EU countries' employment practices to address demographic challenges such as the shrinkage of active labour forces and the consequent shortage of skills? How best can governments stimulate labour mobility and devise also social security systems that fit new needs of workers and employees? How much common ground is there between them on family policies aimed at stimulating employment while reconciling professional and personal life?

Ole Christensen MEP*

Member of the European Parliament Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

Catelene Passchier

Confederal Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

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Nikolaus van der Pas European Commission Director General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
Ton Wilthagen Professor at the Faculty of Law and Head of the International Flexicurity Research Programme at the University of Tilburg, the Netherlands
Annemarie Muntz President of the European Confederation of Private Employment Agencies (Eurociett)

Co-moderated by **Shirin Wheeler**, EU Correspondent of the BBC World Service, and **Giles Merritt**, Secretary General of *Friends of Europe*

12.00 – 12.30 *Coffee break*

Session III 12.30 - 13.30	FOR HOW LONG WILL PENSIONS AND HEALTHCARE BE AFFORDABLE?
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Discouraging early retirement is now a widespread policy goal, reflecting Europe's alarming outlook in which 60% of adults will by 2050 be over 65. The crunch will anyway come long before then; In France state pensions that in 2020 are to cost 0.8% of GDP will by 2040 rise to 2.4%, illustrating how pension commitments could disrupt the social and political equilibriums. Present policy thinking is shoring up state and corporate pension schemes, but what sort of new ideas could restructure them to cope with an ageing society in which fewer and fewer workers must fund an ever-larger retirement sector? Is a political revolution on the cards in which state pensions and health insurance would be phased out in favour of more flexible privatised systems?

Robert Anderson Coordinator of the Living Conditions research programme at the European Foundation for the Improvement of Working and Living Conditions
Jos Berghman Professor of Social Policy and Head of the Sociology Department at the Faculty of Social Sciences of Leuven University, Belgium
John Hawksworth Head of Macroeconomics at PricewaterhouseCoopers U.K.
Marian Hosek Czech Republic's Deputy Minister for Social Policy, Social Services and Family Policy
Andrej Vizjak* Slovenian Minister of the Economy

Co-moderated by **Shirin Wheeler**, EU Correspondent of the BBC World Service, and **Giles Merritt**, Secretary General of *Friends of Europe*

13.30 – 14.30 *Lunch*

14.30 *End of Summit*

**to be confirmed*

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