

Brussels, 7 November 2008

The employment ministers of 43 European and Mediterranean countries meet for the first time

The employment ministers of the 27 European Union countries and 16 Mediterranean partner states will meet for the first time on 9-10 November in Marrakech (Morocco) to discuss employment, employability and decent work. At the end of the conference the ministers are due to adopt a framework for action to strengthen dialogue and joint measures at regional level.

According to Vladimír Špidla, the Member of the Commission responsible for employment, social affairs and equal opportunities, 'the European Union and its Mediterranean partners have a common objective, namely to provide their citizens with more and better jobs. The social dimension of our cooperation is essential in order to transform the Mediterranean into an area of peace, democracy, cooperation and prosperity'.

In particular, the ministers will highlight the prospects and challenges resulting from globalisation, climate change and technological development as well as social and demographic changes. They will take stock of the region's socio-economic situation, especially in the context of the present financial crisis and its effects on employment.

The meeting will look at concrete proposals to promote job creation, labour market modernisation to improve the ability to react to changes, and development of human resources geared to the needs of the labour market. The ministers will emphasise the importance of an integrated approach combining employment policy with economic, tax, social and environmental policies, as well as education and training policy.

The discussions will be based on the preparatory work undertaken at the employment workshop organised by the European Commission in Brussels in December 2007, which brought together government and social partner representatives from the European and Mediterranean countries, together with representatives of international organisations.

Before the conference, the ministers will meet social partner representatives from the region, using the opportunity to stress the essential role which social dialogue has to play in managing economic change.

At the end of the conference the ministers are due to adopt a framework for action to strengthen dialogue, joint measures, and exchanges of best practices. Follow-up arrangements will be put in place in order to ensure the exchange of information and data on national trends and policy developments. The next Euro-Mediterranean conference of ministers of employment and labour is scheduled for 2010.

Further information: http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/euromed/index_en.htm