

**EUROCADRES' position on
"Commission's Communication on "Towards Common Principles of
Flexicurity: More and Better Jobs through Flexibility and Security"****Introduction:**

1. EUROCADRES welcomes the invitation from the European Commission to continue the dialogue on the establishment and implementation of successful flexicurity strategies. As a European social partner for employees we firstly ask for an increased focus on security rather than on flexibility.
2. EUROCADRES notes that the European Commission exclusively uses the expression "workers" in this communication. EUROCADRES want to stress that a growing number of unemployed/employed/self-employed EU-citizens no longer identify themselves with this designation. EUROCADRES will give its view on these flexicurity principles from the perspective of professional and managerial staff (P&MS) in Europe. EUROCADRES supports any comments from a general employee point of view on flexicurity made by ETUC.
3. EUROCADRES initially recalls the words of Commissioner Vladimír Špidla; "Flexicurity provides a balance between rights and responsibilities, for workers and companies as well as for public authorities. The flexicurity approach is about creating the positive interplay between flexibility and security." In this context it is also necessary to remind that any compulsory concrete actions to establish a flexicurity approach are to be taken on national level and adapted to the different member states' specific characteristics, labour markets and labour market systems. The efforts from Community level should only be on a strategic and inspirational level. Lifelong learning strategies, an effective labour market policy and a modern social security system are also excellent ingredients for a successful flexicurity approach. The use of the OECD indicator on employment protection legislation (EPL) as sole benchmark gauges should be avoided since they are not sufficiently balanced to match each national system.

Flexicurity in general:

4. Flexicurity is an open concept and there are different types of flexibility and security. It is often the result of a complex blend of elements: effective macro-economic policies, adapted tax policies, education and training opportunities, clear employment security, etc. One important question is what kind of job contracts do P&MS want and to what extent do P&MS find the adjusted level of flexibility acceptable.

5. In a rapidly changing world, the trend is increasingly moving P&MS away from a lifetime of job security in one workplace towards employment security in multiple workplaces. The employment security of P&MS depends on retaining employability through investment in competence development and should also be backed up by an acceptable level of income security. All stakeholders are important: local authorities, employment partnerships, regional/local development agencies and entrepreneurship centres. When the market requests flexicurity it can be an opportunity and a challenge for P&MS to acquire a stronger labour market position. EUROCADRES regards a continued European debate on improving income security and social security systems for P&MS on Community and national level necessary.

6. EUROCADRES does not accept that the debate on European level about flexicurity is limited to 'labour market' policies: P&MS also suggest including macro-economic policy, employment security, job creation, training & education, lifelong learning, recognition of qualifications, welfare system, career development, working time, etc. Negotiations and collective bargaining have always been key issues for trade unions. EUROCADRES therefore asks the opportunity for our member organisations to use these instruments to turn flexicurity into real opportunities for improving the P&MS labour market positions, thus recuperating the situation for all employees in Europe.

7. Managers are often the organisers of the concrete flexibility in their company or organisation. EUROCADRES calls for a clear negotiated framework agreement in order to create better possibilities to "manage" this flexibility and to support our member groups. In this setting EUROCADRES want to raise the proposed principle number 5; "High quality workplaces with capable leadership, good organisation of work and continuous upgrading of skills are part of the objectives of flexicurity." EUROCADRES recognize this proposal as a support of our vision: The professional and managerial staff in any context (Community, National, Company) is the shepherds of reforms and implementation of change.

8. The key elements of a P&MS labour market policy is lifelong learning & training, including training on-the-job, which increases the employability of professionals and managers and ensures that companies have access to a skilled workforce. Increased voluntary mobility, both professional and geographical, will benefit P&MS - to develop their qualifications, career opportunities, skills and competences, etc. A vigorously adjusted flexibility framework will also enable a better balance between professional & private life for P&MS. A prerequisite for this is equality between women and men, both in the labour market and in the home. It is important that the working time is organised in a way that it creates space for work, family and leisure time. Additionally we need to mention the OECD report "Education at a glance 2007"; In countries where university education has expanded the most has not experienced any deterioration employment prospects for the lesser qualified (contrary to what many predicted). Between 1995-2004, France, Ireland, Korea had

the fastest growth in higher education attainment and saw unemployment among the less well-qualified decline or rise only marginally. By contrast, Germany, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic had little or no growth in higher education attainment between 1995-2004 and substantial growth in unemployment among the less well-qualified.

9 Flexicurity and Professional & Managerial Staff:

- a. 'Flexible' labour markets mustn't become segmented labour markets, but instead "mobile labour markets, improving employment aspects for all.
- b. The "security-in-change" is a good example, because through cooperation among the P&MS, employer and labour administration, it eases mobility and makes finding work easier. A P&MS whose employment is terminated for production and economic reasons may get a paid leave from work during the term of notice for the purposes of job seeking; s/he may be placed in a specially tailored job-seeking programme and may get enhanced unemployment benefit. Flexicurity must give more jobs and less precariousness.
- c. Each country, within the EU context, has to build its own path based on the characteristics of its economy and tradition. Partnerships at national and local level with all stakeholders hold the key to having more desirable labour market outcomes. Country tradition will guide the choice of crucial stakeholders whether they are social partners, regional governments, civil society, associations or local authorities.
- d. EUROCADRES comprehension of flexicurity is a negotiated and agreed one, which is best done at national level at the work place where the social partners are an integrated and inevitable part of the process. EUROCADRES promotes a negotiated framework on European level, formulating strategic and inspirational principles on European flexicurity. EUROCADRES will promote new ways for developing new flexicurity agreements between employees and employers. P&MS must be involved from the start in the flexibility processes. Business services are increasing in the knowledge society and therefore needs tailored trade union answers.
- e. Income security is a precondition for flexicurity. Strong National Social Security and Welfare State systems have to sustain the income security and provide financial and contractual rights for all.
- f. Active labour market measures require considerable public funds and a full commitment from social partners and governments. Strong education and training systems, accessible for all P&MS are a prerequisite.

Comments on the Proposed Principles: (to Presidium/Ex.com to propose)

(1) Objective:

Flexicurity involves flexible and reliable contractual arrangements (from the perspective of the employer and the employee, of insiders and outsiders); comprehensive lifelong learning strategies; effective active labour market policies and modern social security systems. Its objective is to reinforce the implementation of the Growth and Jobs Strategy, create more and better jobs, and strengthen the European social models, by providing new forms of flexibility and security to increase adaptability, employment and social cohesion.

Suggested amendments:

- Development at work; attractive career possibilities
- Stability, continuity and sustainability are other necessary criteria's for achieving high quality production of goods and services

(2) Balance:

Flexicurity implies a balance between rights and responsibilities for employers, workers, job seekers and public authorities.

(3) Uniqueness

Flexicurity should be adapted to the specific circumstances, labour markets and industrial relations of the Member States. Flexicurity is not about one single labour market model or a single policy strategy.

(4) Insiders/Outsiders

Flexicurity should reduce the divide between insiders and outsiders on the labour market. Current insiders need support to be prepared for and protected during job to job transitions. Current outsiders - including those out of work, where women, the young and migrants are over-represented - need easy entry points to work and stepping-stones to enable progress into stable contractual arrangements.

(5) Management

Internal (within the enterprise) as well as external (from one enterprise to another) flexicurity should be promoted. Sufficient flexibility in recruitment and dismissal must be accompanied by secure transitions from job to job. Upward mobility needs to be facilitated, as well as between unemployment or inactivity and work. High-quality workplaces with capable leadership, good organisation of work, and continuous upgrading of skills are part of the objectives of flexicurity. Social protection needs to support, not inhibit, mobility.

Suggested amendments:

- "...dismissal can only be attained when a situation is reached, in which secure transitions from job to job are realised."
- As second last sentence: "Besides its basic function as providing reasonable income security."
- Add also "public authority" since people is not only employed in enterprises

(6) For all

Flexicurity should support gender equality by promoting equal access to quality employment for women and men, and by offering possibilities to reconcile work and family life as well as providing equal opportunities to migrants, young, disabled and older workers.

- Add private to family life as: "...family/private life as..."

(7) Responsibility

Flexicurity requires a climate of trust and dialogue between public authorities and social partners, where all are prepared to take responsibility for change, and produce balanced policy packages.

Suggested amendment:

- The relationship also among the social partners needs to be based on mutual respect and understanding.
- Strong support for the development of effective social partners on EU, national and company level.

(8) Finance

Flexicurity policies have budgetary costs and should be pursued also with a view to contribute to sound and financially sustainable budgetary policies. They should also aim at a fair distribution of costs and benefits, especially between businesses, individuals and public budgets, with particular attention to the specific situation of SMEs. At the same time, effective flexicurity policies can contribute to such an overall objective.

Suggested amendment:

- "...objective by replacing budgets aimed at financing benefit-dependency by budgets aimed at making possible active labour market policies."

With best regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carlo Parietti', written in a cursive style.

Carlo Parietti
President of EUROCADRES
The Council of European Professional and Managerial Staff