

Press Release – ESIP European Conference 2006

The *European Social Insurance Platform* (ESIP) will be holding its 3rd European Conference entitled “**Social security, employment and mobility in the European Union – state of affairs and perspectives**”, at the European Economic and Social Committee (Jacques Delors Building) in Brussels on 11 December 2006.

The European Commission has designated the year 2006 the “European Year for Workers’ Mobility”. This is why our conference is entitled “Social security, employment and mobility in the European Union”. We want to take a look at the present state of affairs and focus on the future challenges for social security and employment in a Europe of free movement of persons and free provision of services. As most of you will know, the percentage of Europeans working and residing in another European country than their country of origin has consistently remained around 1.5 percent for the last 30 years. The reason for this is that there are still many legal, administrative and linguistic obstacles which keep our citizens from taking advantage of the mobility options in the EU.

Bearing that in mind and with the hope of finding some solutions for improvement, we want to take a look at current EU-wide initiatives and examples of good practice in the field of employment, and at the issues for cross-border social security provisions in the fields of health care, family care and pensions. We want to highlight the role that social security organisations can play as facilitators of mobility in Europe. This conference will give us the opportunity to shed some light on the added value that our national organisations can offer to the European Worker, the European Patient, the European Pensioner and the European families.

The Conference will be opened by the Vice President of the European Economic and Social Committee, Alexander-Michael Graf von Schwerin, and the European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Mr Vladimir Špidla. Following an introductory report on 35 years of Regulation 1408/71, which will be presented by Ms H el ene Michard of the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the conference will focus on two round table discussions.

The first round table, chaired by Ms Sini Laitinen-Kuikka from the Finnish Centre of Pensions, will be devoted to the social security aspects, in particular in the context of cross border health care and patient mobility and the improvement of portability of complementary pensions. In the second round table discussion, chaired by Mr Heikki Pohja, the Director of the Finnish Unemployment Insurance Fund, reports on good practices designed to enhance mobility will be presented by a number of European organisations active in various policy sectors. And then, last but not least, Ms Claire Damilano from the European Citizen Action Service will give an insight into mobility from the European Citizens’ point of view.

The Conference will be attended by the national social security organisations, international and European level decision-makers in the field of social protection, related NGOs, the Social Partners and academia.

About the *European Social Insurance Platform (ESIP)*

The *European Social Insurance Platform (ESIP)*, looking back on 10 years since its creation in 1996, today represents more than 30 social insurance organisations from twelve Members States, Romania and Switzerland, active in the field of health insurance, pensions, family benefits, occupational safety and accident insurance, and unemployment insurance. From 1 January 2007, ESIP will welcome the national social security organisations of Slovakia and Romania as full members along with the International Pension Centre of the United Kingdom. The aims of ESIP and its members are to preserve high-profile social security for Europe; to reinforce solidarity-based social insurance systems and to maintain European social protection quality. ESIP builds strategic alliances for developing common positions to influence the European decision-making process and is a consultation forum for the European institutions and other multinational bodies active in the field of social security.

For more information, please contact:

Dr Christine Dawson
Liaison Officer ESIP
Tel: +32 2 282 05 62
E-mail: christine.dawson@esip.org

For further information about ESIP please visit the ESIP website at: www.esip.org