

Questionnaire for the Workshop in Luxembourg

A) Work on the issues of the economic progress, development and well-being

1. What kind of activities, reports or other documents have been carried out or elaborated in your country on the following topics?

- Economic progress
 - ✓ The ESC, in the beginning of 2010, has presented its opinion on the Challenges Facing the Bulgarian Economy, wherein the stress is laid upon the impact of the global economic crisis on key branches of the economy and the significance of the innovation policy in support of the competitiveness and economic growth is outlined.
 - ✓ The long-term strategic document „National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013” is focused on the four key priorities - improvement of the basic infrastructure, enhancement of the human capital quality with a stress on employment, promotion of entrepreneurship, favourable business environment and good management and support for balanced territory development.
 - ✓ „Innovation Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria and Measures for its Implementation” covering the period by 2013 is meant to enhance the competitiveness of the Bulgarian industry through building a knowledge-based industry.
 - ✓ The Operational Programme „Development of the Bulgarian Economy Competitiveness 2007-2013” focuses on the establishment and implementation of innovative products and technologies in the manufacturing process, setting up of own innovative business, modernisation and technological renovation, implementation of energy saving technologies in manufacture.
- Quality of life
 - ✓ In its analysis on Combating Poverty in Bulgaria the ESC stresses that the successful tackling the issues related to poverty and social exclusion, is directly dependent on the macroeconomic stability and the achievement of sustainable economic growth. The Council has found that the main challenges facing this country are related to the considerable disproportions on a regional basis in the quality of life, the

deteriorated qualitative and quantitative parameters of the labour resources and the high morbidity and negative evaluation of the population health status. The ESC recommends undertaking measures, which will allow the poor to gain productive qualities (education, skills and health) as well as promoting initiatives for self-help and social funding in support of self-employment.

- ✓ In another opinion on Incomes Policy - a Main Leverage for Improving Quality of Life and a Factor for Reducing Poverty in Bulgaria the ESC insists on implementing policies and mechanisms for accelerated growth of incomes as well as adopting an official and adequate poverty line and dovetailing the social transfers with it.
- ✓ Showing its consistent commitment to the enhancement of the quality of life in this country, in 2010 the ESC has adopted an opinion on the Current Problems and Policies on the Labour Market, wherein it stresses upon the need of implementing an active policy on incomes, which shall foster the gradual convergence of the incomes in Bulgaria with those in the other EU Member States, dovetailing of the social protection system with the poverty line and increase in minimum wage depending on the poverty line, labour productivity and the ratio of the minimum wage to the average wage for this country.
- ✓ Optimisation of the social protection and social insurance systems, combating poverty, protection of children and the family and tackling the demographic problems of this country, according to the ESC these are the milestones of the new policies, which should be elaborated and implemented in the social sphere; this is stated in the adopted in 2010 opinion of the ESC on Social Insurance and Social Protection.
- ✓ Again in its opinion on Health and Safety at Work - Socio-economic Issues, the Council has stressed upon the significance of the working conditions for reducing the occupational traumatism and the need of elaboration of a national policy on health and safety at work.
- Sustainable Development
 - ✓ The National Sustainable Development Strategy addresses environmental, economic and social issues concerning employment, education and training, health, access to a healthy natural environment,

responsible and shared management as well as reduction and elimination of the unstable models of manufacture and consumption.

- ✓ The objective of the Operational Programme „Regional Development 2007-2013” is town renewal, tourism development, elaboration of local and regional transportation schemes and fostering integrated initiatives for regional and local development.
- ✓ The objective of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 is the development of competitive and innovation-based agriculture, forestry and food processing industry in line with the protection of the natural resources and the environment.
- ✓ The objective of the National Strategy for Development of the Forest Sector in Bulgaria 2006-2015 is to promote a sustainable forest management and multifunctional forestry so as to develop an economically viable forest sector, which shall contribute to the economic development.
- ✓ The objective of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Tourism in Bulgaria 2009-2013 is to promote sustainable schemes for development and management of the tourist activities.
- Relationship between the economic activities and the use of natural resources
 - ✓ The National Long-term Programme for Promoting the Use of Biofuels in the Transport Sector 2008-2020 is meant to promote the use of biofuels through enhancement of the cost-effectiveness of their production, to stimulate the scientific research in this aspect and the investigation of the possibilities for production of biofuels feedstocks and of the biofuels themselves.
 - ✓ The National Long-term Programme for Promoting the Use of Biomass 2008-2020 is meant to set the general framework for the possibilities of biomass utilisation for the purposes of energy production.
 - ✓ The objective of the National Long-term Programme for Promoting the Use of Renewable Energy Sources 2005–2015 is the existing share of renewable energy sources to exceed 8% of the gross production of electric power, while by 2015 this target figures at 9%, as well as conventional fuels and energies to be replaced.
 - ✓ The objective of the National Long-Term Energy Efficiency Programme by 2015 is to specify the initiatives and measures for energy efficiency

enhancement. The stress is on the reduction of the energy intensity of the GDP in the economic sectors, which are the end-consumers of fuels and energy, such as industry, transport, services, household consumption and agriculture.

- Environmental issues
 - ✓ The Operational Programme Environment 2007-2013 has foreseen improvement and development of the infrastructure for tap water and waste water in the populated areas as well as waste treatment and protection and recovery of the biodiversity.
 - ✓ The objectives of the National Strategy for Water Sector Development and Management by 2015 cover provision of sufficient quantity of tap water of good quality, protection of surface water and groundwater status and development of effective holdings in this branch.
 - ✓ The objective of the National Plan for Biodiversity Protection 2005–2010 is protection, recovery and sustainable management of biodiversity in this country.
- Evolution of communal life
 - ✓ The National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality 2009–2015 is aimed at achieving strong social cohesion and ensuring equal opportunities for men and women in all fields of social life.
 - ✓ The objective of the national programme Providing Possibilities for Active Ageing, Full Pensioners' Involvement in Social Life and Prevention against their Social Exclusion is providing equal access of pensioners to services, possibilities for more active social life, conditions for use of the opportunities for development of those at pension age.
 - ✓ The ESC has elaborated an opinion on the Family, Good Parentship and Equal Gender Opportunities to stress upon the significance of development of programmes for eradication of social inequality among children and for encouraging employers to establish companies' family policies.
- Access of population to public services (education, health care, transport, etc.)
 - ✓ The National Health Strategy 2008-2013 and Action Plan concurrently addresses the fair access to health services, the natural environment, the political management and socio-economic development.

- ✓ The objective of the National Action Programme on Environment and Health 2008-2013 is to preclude and significantly reduce sickness and death rates, to preclude and contain the respiratory diseases due to the atmospheric air pollution, the impact of hazardous chemical substances and chemicals (e.g. heavy metals), physical factors (e.g. loud noise), biological agents and and harmful working conditions during pregnancy, childhood and adolescence.
- ✓ The objective of the National Programme for Development of School Education and Pre-school Education and Preparation 2006–2015 is to set the national objectives for development of school education, to outline the main measures for their achievement and to foster the Bulgarian school education turning into up-dated and accessible education of high quality.
- ✓ The Operational Programme Transport 2007–2013 is meant to foster the investment in construction, modernisation and rehabilitation of the national transport road and railroad infrastructure, the improvement of the transport connections with neighbouring countries, of shipping and safety on the sea and inland waterways of Bulgaria as well as the development of combined transport.

2. Which of the above mentioned topics is your ESC working on now?

The ESC is actively involved in the elaboration of the anti-crisis programme of this country. The economic recovery and the situation on the labour market have been in the focus of the ESC's work during the recent months. In this regard the ESC has elaborated three opinions addressing the economic policy, labour market as well as social insurance and social protection. Therein is underlined the significance of the effective use of innovation and technologies while observing the environmental protection requirements, the promotion of social integration and improvement of the social conditions in this country being basic preconditions for building of a more competitive economy. Particular attention has been drawn to the challenges ensuing from population ageing, to ensuring health and safety at work and to protection of children and the family.

3. Which of the above mentioned topics is your ESC planning to work on in the future?

The Council has planned to elaborate and table before the broad public issues concerning the current health care reform in this country, the issues of the disabled and the protection of the disadvantaged as well as the climate change impact on the sustainable development of Bulgaria. The ESC also focuses on social challenges in a wider range and it plans to investigate the social dimensions of the Lisbon Treaty and the perspectives to this country ensuing from the new EU 2020 Strategy. With a view to the better social cohesion and promotion of the Community approach, the ESC in its work has also stressed on the corporate social responsibility and the social audit in the Bulgarian enterprises.

4. If such topics are not being considered at present, is your ESC interested in working on these topics in the near future? What activities more particularly are being planned?

The ESC shows interest in investigating and broadening skills of its experts in the field of the new indicators for measurement of the economic progress. The established cooperation with public authorities and civil organisations in this country would boost the effective public debate in terms of prioritising the environmental and social aspects in the comprehensive approach to the economic activity.

B) National interest in the topics under consideration

5. How is your ESC going to work on the topics and does it show interest in the issues in question?

The main mechanisms in the work of the ESC are the initiation and elaboration of analyses, opinions and recommendations on the issues in question so as to help the national authorities in the implementation of the economic and social policies. It is a practice of the Council to organise consultations and public discussions with the Legislature and the Executive as well as with representatives of the civil society, which in this particular case would be intended to clarify the significance of the aspects of the sustainable development and boosting the prosperity. The ESC also

relies on the broad professional skills of its experts on identifying the national peculiarities and proposing appropriate solutions with a view to building of more environmentally friendly, more innovative and more competitive economy.

6. Which of the topics are of greatest interest to you to work on?

The Council expresses its willingness to work on the topics of sustainable economic and social development, the economic prosperity and the increase of the innovative potential of the economy as well as extending the access to social services. A priority in the work of the Council is the improvement of quality of life, provision of better working conditions, promotion of the regional development and the active social life in this country.

7. What is the interest of the civil society in your country in the topics as specified? Do you think that the society is concerned about these issues and considers them a priority?

The civil society in Bulgaria is active mostly on the environmental issues as could be seen during the discussions on Natura 2000 Networking Programme. In this context in 2009 the ESC organised an international conference and started a series of discussions on the issues ensuing from the climate change and the need of duly undertaking measures in different economic sectors in Bulgaria. However, as a whole the society has not paid due attention to the significance of the environmental dimensions for the economic development yet. The work of the civil organisations should be more actively focused on the issues of the cohesive economic and environmentally friendly development and in this regard the Council realises its key role of a social catalyst.

C) Proposals concerning the future work in the field of the measurement of progress, development and well-being

8. What are the main challenges and perspectives that you expect?

The challenges to the development and implementation of a successful system of indicators and methodological principles for measurement of the economic

progress not only through GDP ensue from the subjective nature of most indicators towards the individual perceptions of happiness, well-being, etc., the impossibility for these indicators to be covered precisely in terms of quantity and unambiguously as well as the need of general re-think of the socio-economic activity. The overcoming of these difficulties would ensure more effective covering of the economic dynamics, which would be of help and would make the economic policy more effective in terms of more clearly defined social and structural peculiarities.

9. Which aspects in your view are particularly important for the measurement of the social progress, the development and well-being?

It is particularly important to develop a clear and unambiguous methodology for measurement of the specified subjective indicators of well-being, happiness, quality of life, etc. The quantitative determination of these indices requires development of new skills and enrichment of the statistical practices and methods of work, which is related to a change in the social and political attitudes and in this context the economic and social councils can contribute a lot to this process.

10. Do you have any proposals or examples of good practices that you can describe in a presentation on the measurement of social progress, development and well-being?

The issues under consideration are of particular interest to the ESC. In its work the Council has many times stressed on the issues of social progress, development and well-being with a view to the improvement of the socio-economic conditions in this country. The improvement of the skills in the field of quantitative measurement of the specified indicators is of significance for the Council and we hope that in the future we will be able to contribute also by concrete results in this aspect.

11. Do you have any proposals or examples of good practices to present in the field of measurement of social progress, development and well-being having been elaborated together with the civil society or planned to be developed with the civil society actively involved in this process?

The ESC has been actively committed to the aspects of the economic prosperity and economic progress and evidence can be found in the numerous organised public

discussions and consultations with various structures of the civil society. The Council endeavours to broaden the scope and aspects of the joint work with the civil institutions and in the future to propose the results from the joint efforts with a view to the improvement of the socio-economic development.