From the Minister of State
for Work and Pensions

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The Lord Boswell
Chairman of the European Union Select Committee
Committee Office
House of Lords
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2nd October 2015

Dear Lord Boswell

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) – 5th October 2015

Departments are required to provide a factual written Ministerial Statement after each Council, setting out how each agenda item was handled. However, as this falls during the recess period, I am writing to you now to advise you of these details.

Shan Morgan, the UK Deputy Permanent Representative to the European Union will represent the UK at the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council which will take place on 5th October 2015 in Luxembourg.

There will be a policy debate on the way forward for social governance in an inclusive Europe, and as part of the discussion, the Council will endorse key messages from the report of the Social Protection Committee on the social policy reforms for growth and cohesion; and a proposal for a Council Recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market.

The Presidency will seek a general approach on the proposals for a Directive of the European Parliament and the Council on improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges and related measures.

The Council will also seek to adopt draft Council Conclusions on adequate retirement incomes in the context of ageing societies; draft Council Conclusions on a new Agenda for Health and Safety at Work to foster better working conditions; and

the proposal for a Council Decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States.

The Council will receive information from the Commission and the Presidency on the relaunch of the social dialogue at European level.

Under any other business, the Luxembourg Presidency will inform the Council on the informal meeting of the employment and social affairs ministers of the Member States of the euro area taking place on 5th October 2015, and the conference on 'Working conditions for tomorrow' held in Luxembourg on 10-11 September 2015. The Commission will provide information on labour mobility: facts, figures and issues.

I will be depositing a copy of this letter in the House Library and copying it to Bill Cash MP, Chairman of the House of Commons European Scrutiny Committee; Chris Johnson, Clerk to the Lords Committee; Sarah Davies, Clerk to the Commons Committee; Les Saunders (Cabinet Office) and Basit Ahmed (DWP Scrutiny Co-ordinator).

With best wishes,

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Minister for Employment