



30.1.2015

## NOTICE TO MEMBERS

**Subject: Petition No 2362/2013 by Juana Cruz Elena Vela Palacios (ES) on an EU-wide retirement age throughout all Member-States**

### 1. Summary of petition

The petitioner calls upon the European Parliament to make a proposal to the European Commission in order to provide a more uniform, therefore less discriminatory, retirement age throughout the EU countries. The proponent envisages, for instance, a 67-year-old EU-wide limit which, it is further stated, taking into consideration a higher life expectancy, would make EU pension systems self-sufficient without having to resort to the banking and insurance sectors which could pose more threats to the savings of a life of work.

### 2. Admissibility

Declared admissible on 24 September 2014. Information requested from Commission under Rule 216(6).

### 3. Commission reply, received on 30 January 2015

The European Union has no powers to legislate on the key aspects of the national pension systems, including the pensionable age, which is the responsibility of the Member States. All countries should adapt their pension systems to rising life expectancy, and this must be done continuously rather than by establishing a fixed age by European or national law. There are also different ways of adapting pension systems, including linking the pensionable age to future changes in life expectancy, or by giving people incentives to postpone their retirement as life expectancy increases (e.g. by increasing the number of contribution years required for a full pension). Life expectancy differs from one Member State to another, and people may also have different preferences regarding the age at which they want to retire – and what level of

contributions they are prepared to pay for this.

The EU respects this diversity across Member States and can only legislate on very specific aspects of pensions, such as those affecting the functioning of the internal market (free movement of persons, freedom to provide services, protection of consumers), to tackle discrimination (on the grounds of gender, in particular), and to protect workers' rights, notably in the event of insolvency of their employer. In this context, a number of EU regulations and directives that affect pension schemes in the Member States are already in force.

The EU's Europe 2020 Strategy is the framework for stronger coordination of national policies in the context of the European Semester, using Country Specific Recommendations. This process is supported by the work of policy committees (Social Protection Committee, Employment Committee, Economic Policy Committee) which bring together senior officials from the Member States and the Commission to examine in detail specific challenges related to pension adequacy and sustainability and the promotion of longer working lives.

The EU can also mobilise funds to achieve certain policy goals related to pensions. The European Social Fund can be used to promote the employability and labour market opportunities for older workers. Furthermore, the EU promotes cooperation and mutual learning, notably through the *Open Method of Coordination*.

### Conclusion

The European Commission has engaged in activities to contribute to ensuring sustainable pension systems. However, it has no competence to propose legislation providing for a uniform pensionable age for all Member States.