1. **Adoption of the agenda**
   The agenda was approved without changes.

2. **Summary report of the Extraordinary Liaison Forum of 17 December 2009**
   Mr Tricart stated that the title for agenda point 5 in the draft minutes should read "Sector councils for skills and employment, and feedback from the restructuring fora of November and December 2009". In relation to this agenda point, Ms Andread HUSEN-BRADLEY (EMF) noted that, contrary to what is stated in the draft minutes, no sectoral skills council had been set up in the automotive industry yet, although EMF was not opposed to the idea. Taking into account the above comments, the draft minutes were adopted.

3. **Introduction**
   The meeting was chaired by Mr Jean-Paul Tricart, Head of Unit for Social Dialogue and Industrial Relations (EMPL/F1). In his introduction, Mr Tricart informed about recent policy developments of relevance to social dialogue. He highlighted in particular: the start in office of the new Commission; the upcoming Spring European Council which would be dedicated to the theme of growth and jobs and discuss strategies to exit from the crisis; and the new Europe 2020 Strategy; and the upcoming Tripartite Social Summit on 25 March 2010, for the first time in the presence of President Van Rompuy.

   With regard to the Europe 2020 Strategy, Mr Tricart presented the main outcomes of the public consultation launched at the end of 2009, the main findings of the Lisbon Strategy evaluation, both adopted on 2 February 2010 and the presentation and contribution of President Barroso to the Informal European Council of 11 February 2010 (for more detail, see summary information sheet and documents attached).

   He noted that there was wide agreement on a number of points which had been raised prominently in the contributions of the social partners to the Europe 2020 consultation, including: the need to further strengthen the social dimension in the Europe 2020 Strategy; the need for an ambitious, future-oriented industrial policy in support of competitive EU industries; the need for a consolidation of public finances; the need to develop a new, sustainable economic paradigm, given that a simple return to the previous economic model was not a viable option; or again the need to further strengthen the social partners’ capacity and social dialogue at all levels (EU, national, regional, sector and company-level), making full use of their collective bargaining
autonomy and of the problem-solving potential of social dialogue, in accordance with Article 152 TFEU (EU recognition and promotion of the social partners and social dialogue).

Mr Tricart went on to present an update on the ongoing preparations of the Commission Communication on European sectoral social dialogue. The text was currently being drafted, taking into account the comments received from social partners on the draft outline. In addition to presenting a review of European sectoral social dialogue since its formal establishment in 1998, the text would also address the potential of European sectoral social dialogue to accompany structural reforms and contribute to the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The date for adoption of the text had not yet been fixed, but most likely April/May 2010.

Mr Tricart further highlighted a number of positive recent developments in European sectoral social dialogue, including: the positive feedback from the European Parliament and from the Council to reach a political agreement on the proposed directive on prevention from the use of sharps in the hospitals and health care sector; the launch of the new sectoral social dialogue committee in the metal industry on 14 January 2010 which would cover more than 15 million employees (and which would co-exist with the already established committee on shipbuilding); the progress being made with a view to the possible set-up of a formal social dialogue committee in central administrations (currently in test phase) and the announced willingness of the current Spanish rotating Presidency to support this process; the planned set-up of two new sectoral social dialogue committees in the paper industry and the education sector, bringing the number of European sectoral social dialogue committees to 40 in spring 2010; ongoing discussions and developments in other sectors of the economy interested in promoting social dialogue at European level, including the agro-food industry, the sports sector, business and information and communication technology services, and the social economy. Mr Tricart highlighted that, thanks to its positive dynamics, European sectoral social dialogue now covered the whole primary sector, most of the secondary sector (except the agro-food industry) and a large, increasing part of the tertiary sector, as well as up to 145 million employees in the European Union, i.e. more than 75% of the EU workforce. He underlined that European sectoral social dialogue was a successful and powerful tool of dialogue, standard setting, coordination and good governance.

Mr Tricart went on to inform social partners on the ongoing mid-term review on the implementation of the Community Strategy for safety and health 2007-2013 on which they would be consulted by the Unit for health, safety and hygiene at work (EMPL/F4). Questionnaires to inter-professional social partners and the members of the Advisory Board on health and safety at work had already been sent out.

With regard to administrative issues, Mr Tricart reminded social partners of the high costs of more than 1 million Euros incurred for the organisation of social dialogue committee meetings outside the Commission premises in 2009. He noted that these costs had to be covered by the budget line for social dialogue and industrial relations (budget heading 04.03.03.01), thus reducing the resources available to support social partner projects. He therefore asked social partners to reduce the cancellations of meetings and stick to the annual meeting planning as much as possible in order to avoid a negative impact on the allocation of meeting capacities in 2011 and beyond. He also reminded social partners of the need to submit the agendas for meetings to be organised outside the Commission premises at least 4 weeks before the meeting. He further informed on recent significant cuts in the 2010 mission budget of DG EMPL,
including the Unit for social dialogue and industrial relations which would have an impact on the unit's availability to attend events organised in the context of social partner projects or other events organised by social partners. He called upon social partners to inform the Commission as early as possible on any upcoming events to which they would like to invite the Commission.

In the subsequent discussion, social partners showed understanding for the constraints of the Commission, but asked for a more flexible approach which would also take account of the constraints of the social partners, notably in the current times of crisis. They also informed the Commission that the participation of representatives from the new member states in social dialogue activities required a strong support from the Commission, including the participation of Commission representatives in social dialogue meetings taking place in the new member states and a more timely reimbursement of social partner representatives at social dialogue meetings. They expressed some lack of understanding for the difficulties of the Commission to ensure more adequate delays for the reimbursement of participants' expenses. In this context, Mr Tricart recalled that the Commission was facing a huge administrative workload due to the very high number of meetings in 2009 as a result of the number of negotiation meetings together with a specific human resource problem due to the long-term sickness of a key colleague in charge of the reimbursement procedure who had been absent for more than a year. While apologising for this situation he underlined at the same time that 95% of the pending files had been dealt with in the meantime but that problems with some particular files did persist in some few cases where relevant documents had not been submitted or where problems with the account and bank identification needed to be solved. Mr Tricart also recalled that the Commission had started to assess the scope of a new online registration tool which would allow advance payments of flight tickets directly by the Commission for those participants confirming their participation to the social dialogue committee meeting in question at least 3 weeks before the meeting. He invited sectors who would wish to inform the Commission of their possible interest to be involved in a possible pilot project to test such a tool.

With regard to the review of European sectoral social dialogue, participants also called for a strengthening of communication and visibility and for a stronger recognition of the key role of social dialogue in the anticipation of change. Social partners also asked for a need to increase the financial support to social dialogue, in line with the increasing number of committees. Furthermore, Mr CHAGAS (ETF) informed on the advanced state of play of the preparation of a 41st sectoral social dialogue committee, from the workers' side, in the ports sector.

4. Representativeness studies in support of European sectoral social dialogue: Methodology, involvement of social partners and planning for 2010 and beyond

Ms DEMETRIADES, Head of Industrial Relations and Workplace Developments, and Mr WELZ from the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) gave a detailed presentation on the scope, organisation and methodology of the representativeness studies, on the criteria for the representativeness of European social partner organisations and on the planning and timetable for the representativeness studies to be carried out in 2010 (see attached presentations for more detail).
Mr Tricart further highlighted the politically important, though technical, nature of the representativeness studies and recalled the obligation of the Commission, under the Treaty and following related Court rulings, to assess and monitor the representativeness of the social dialogue organizations not only at the time of the creation of committees but also during their existence, including in response to sectoral developments, the effective scope and work of the committee and/or changes regarding the actors involved. The Commission would also pay particular attention to the principle of mutual recognition and the joint views of the recognised social partners.

In the subsequent discussion, social partners raised questions on the following issues: the choice of the sectors to be assessed; the data collection at national level; the state of ongoing studies launched in 2009 (education, central administration, metal industry); the follow-up given to the representativeness studies; the relevance of NACE codes for the statistical demarcation of the sectors under study; the complementary representativeness of other organisations; and the coverage of so-called 'syndicats jaunes'. Some social partners also expressed concerns regarding the limited resources of Eurofound to carry out these representativeness studies and underlined the need for more in-depth analyses on the representativeness of social partner organisations.

In response to the questions raised, Mr Tricart clarified that there are five main reasons for the Commission to request a representative study for a sector: (1) in relation to the set-up of a new committee; (2) in case sectoral social partners decide to engage in negotiations which could lead to an agreement that may have to be submitted to Council (see e.g. the adoption by Council of the recent Directive on risk prevention from the use of sharps in the hospitals and health care sector, based on a negotiated agreement of the social partners in the sector); (3) in the case of significant changes in a sector which could put in question either the delimitation of a sector (as e.g. in the telecommunications sector which is part of the bigger sector of information and communication technologies) or the relations between the actors; (4) updates in case of EU enlargements; (5) in case of specific requests by the social partners of a sector (such as e.g. in the commerce sector in 2010). Furthermore, the Commission may conduct ad hoc preliminary assessments, based on questionnaire responses, for organisations which contact the Commission and ask for the recognition as social partners. Against the background of an increasing number of sectoral social dialogue committees Mr Tricart stated that there was a need to increase also the number of representativeness studies per year in order to ensure a regular and systematic assessment of the representativeness of social partner organisations.

Mr Welz noted that, as requested by the Commission, the NACE classification should in general be as broad as possible and be related to the (possible) scope of a sector. The representativeness study should further allow to identify all relevant organisations both at national and European level. He also called upon the European social partner organisations to inform their national affiliates on the political importance of the representativeness studies, to comment on the proposed NACE classification at the beginning of the process and to provide Eurofound with the necessary contacts for interviews and data collection at national level. He suggested that both European social partner organisations and the Commission should provide support letters which the EIRO correspondents could use in their contacts with national organisations. Ms
Demetriades further underlined the involvement of social partners in the whole process, and notably in the final evaluation of the study.

5. **Information points from the Commission**
Under this agenda point, the Commission provided information on a number of points of interest to social partners:

- Ms Elodie FAZI from the Unit for Inclusion and Social Policy (EMPL/E2) made a presentation on the European Year to combat poverty and social exclusion, noting that this was a decentralised campaign with various events at national level and with a focus on media awareness;

- Ms Ariane FONTENELLE from the Unit for Equality between Men/Women (EMPL/G1) made a presentation on the launch of the 2nd phase of the Commission "Gender Pay Gap Campaign", informing about the official launch of the campaign by Vice-President Reding on 5 March 2010 and referring in particular to the partnership programme and recalling that social partners can be included in a database of national contacts which would act as multipliers at national level;

- Ms Nadia ELHAGGAGI from the Unit for Social Dialogue and Industrial Relations made a presentation on the 2009 and 2010 calls for proposals under the autonomous social dialogue budget lines, highlighting in particular the new areas which can be addressed under the 2010 calls, i.e. impact assessments and exchange of experiences and best practice across sectoral social dialogue committees.

On the gender pay gap campaign, social partners asked to what extent this campaign was a complement or rather an alternative to legislative actions in the area. Some of them further asked whether issues such as working poor, decent wages and decent working hours would also be addressed in the context of the European Year to fight poverty and social exclusion.

Mr Tricart further informed on major upcoming international events and related social partner activities, including EuroMed and ASEM Social Partner Fora, the EU-Japan 2010 Symposium and bilateral activities with the US, China and India.

For further detail, see the summary information sheet and presentations attached.

6. **AOB - Dates and topics for Liaison Forum meetings 2010**
Mr Tricart informed that the next Liaison Forum meeting would be held on Thursday, 29 April 2010, in the morning. While inviting social partners to send in their proposals, he suggested as possible topics for Liaison Forum meetings in 2010: the greening of the economy; implementation and evaluation of social dialogue outcomes; and exchange of best practice on social partner projects, e.g. in the areas of training and health and safety.

**Annexes**
- EUROPE 2020: A strategy for sustainable growth and jobs, Contribution and presentation of the President of the European Commission to the informal meeting of Heads of State and Government of 11 February 2010
- "Representativness studies and the work of EUROFOUND", presentation by Ms Stavroula DEMETRIADES, Head of Industrial Relations and Workplace Developments, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound)
- "European social partner organisations and their representativness", presentation by Mr Christian WELZ, Industrial Relations and Workplace Developments, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound)
- "Close the gender pay gap ", presentation by Ms Ariane FONTENELLE, Employment, social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG, Unit for Equality between Men/Women (EMPL/G1)
- "2010 calls for proposals", presentation by DG EMPL/F1
List of participants

**Employers**

Mr Frank BAUMEISTER, UEAPME  
Mr Jair BERTONI, EPFL  
Ms Isabelle BIAIS, CEEMET  
Mr Domenico CAMPOGRANDE, FIEC  
Mr Maxime CERUTTI, BUSINESSEUROPE  
Mr Uwe COMBÜCHEN, CEEMET  
Ms Natalie DARGE, EUROFER  
Mr Sébastien DEBROUWER, BUSINESSEUROPE  
Mr Jérôme DELORME, EACB  
Ms Giovanna FUMAGALLI, CEPI  
Mr Corentin HOUBION, CEC  
Mr Allan JONES, EBU  
Ms Linda KROMJONG, Deutsche Post  
Mr Martin KUNKEL, CEEMET - AGV Stahl (DE)  
Ms Claire LANNE, IMA-Europe  
Ms Marie-Christine LEFEBVRE, FERCO  
Mr Andreas LILL, EFCI  
Ms Dominique LUND, CEFS  
Mr Francesco MARCHI, Euratex  
Ms Francisca MARTINEZ TOLEDO, EUROPECHE  
Mr Charles NOLDA, EFEE  
Mr Andreas OGRINZ, ECEG  
Mr Dennis PENNEL, Eurociett  
Ms Emanuele PREITI, Eurelectric  
Mr Jean-Paul R. PREUMONT, CER  
Mr Nicola REGA, Eurelectric  
Ms Ilaria SAVOINI, Eurocommerce  
Ms Isabel SOBRINO MATE, HOTREC  
Ms Julia SPROGE, PEARLE*  
Mr Jens THAU, EBF - AGV Banken (DE)  
Mr William VIDONJA, CEA

**Workers**

Ms Juliane BIR, ETUC  
Mr Eduardo CHAGAS, ETF  
Ms Penny CLARKE, EPSU  
Mr Stefan CLAUWAERT, ETUI-REHS  
Ms Marie-Anne DE LA BROISE, CEC  
Mr Eric DRESIN, EFFAT  
Ms Liliana FILIP, EFFAT  
Ms Kerstin HOWALD, EFFAT  
Ms Andrea HUSEN-BRADLEY, EMF  
Ms Anne-Claire LE BODIC, CESI  
Ms Nadia LUNDHOLM OLSEN, ETUCE  
Ms Dearbhal MURPHY, FIA  
Mr Marjolein OORSPRONG, UNI europa  
Mr David POISSONNEAU, ETUCE  
Ms Nadia SALSON, EPSU  
Ms Nina Lucia TWARDY, CESI  
Mr Bert VAN VAELENBERG, Eurofedop  
Mr Fabrice WARNECK, UNI europa  
Ms Corinna ZIEROLD, EMCEF

**Other participants:**

Mr Dirk BERGRATH (DE Perm Rep); Ms Lies BUEKENS, Ms Emilie NOE, Mr Peter VANSINTIAN (Cabinet de la Ministre de l’Emploi Belge); Ms Greet MOERMAN (CIAA); Mr Rémi ORTH (PIN-SME); Mr Herman SMULDERS, EC-OE

**European Agencies:**

Mr Jurma KARPPINEN, Ms Stavroula DEMETRIADES, Ms Camilla GALLI DA BINO, Mr Christian WELZ, Mr Felix WOLF, Ms Marina PATRIARKA (Eurofound)

**European Commission:**

Mr Jean-Paul TRICART, Mr Frank SIEBERN-THOMAS, Mr François ZIEGLER, Ms Dorota DLOUCHY, Ms Elisabeth AUFHEIMER, Mr Dirk HADRICH, Mr Carlos LOPES, Mr Heinrich WOLLNY, Ms Patrizia BONOMI, Ms Marina MOSER (EMPL F/1)