

European job mobility action plan (2007-2010)

2008/2098(INI) - 18/12/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 540 to 18 with 31 abstentions, a resolution on the European Job Mobility Action Plan (2007-2010).

The own-initiative report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Monica Maria **IACOB-RIDZI** (EPP-ED, RO) on behalf of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs.

Parliament recalls that about **2% of citizens of working age currently live and work in a Member State**. In this context, Parliament will continue actively to seek solutions to all problems encountered by citizens in exercising their right to mobility within the territory of the EU. Parliament reiterates that EU-wide mobility with security for workers is one of the fundamental rights of Union citizens under the Treaty and that remaining administrative and legal barriers hindering transnational mobility must be removed.

Although Parliament welcomes the Commission's initiative and supports the launch of the proposed Action Plan, in particular as regards promoting mobility on fair conditions, it considers that the EU needs to support the **inclusion of the concept of labour mobility in all Community policies**, especially those concerning the completion of the internal market, the protection of workers, rules concerning posted workers and protection against non-secure work, which may affect mobility within the EU or combat discrimination. In this context, they call on the Commission to treat labour mobility as a priority transversal policy, involving all relevant EU policy areas and all levels of authority in the Member States.

Parliament considers that, while the Commission's Action Plan covers the main issues relating to mobility, much more action still needs to be taken, notably creating stronger links between education systems and the labour market, providing proper information on mobility, maintaining acquired linguistic abilities for workers and their families preparing for mobility via the teaching of foreign languages and, not least, in vocational training and learning systems.

Long-term strategy: Parliament invites the Commission to draw up a long-term mobility strategy which takes into account the requirements of the labour market, economic trends and the prospects for enlargement of the EU, as only a long-term strategy can both guarantee free movement of workers without conflict and properly address brain-drain. It calls on the Commission to take into account the specific needs of female workers of all ages wishing to exercise freedom of movement and to include concrete steps to meet their needs in the four areas of the European Job Mobility Action Plan.

Breaking down administrative barriers to free movement: Parliament urges the Commission to prioritise the streamlining of administrative practices and administrative cooperation so as to allow synergies to develop between national institutions and authorities whose interaction is decisive when trying to resolve problems between Member States efficiently. It considers that Member States should vigorously tackle all legal and administrative barriers and obstacles to geographical mobility at European, national, regional and local levels, such as the non-recognition of mobility-related experiences for career prospects or social security and pensions, particularly within small and medium-sized enterprises. Amongst other measures to promote mobility, the Parliament suggests the teaching of **foreign languages**.

Mobility: a fundamental instrument of the internal market: Parliament reiterates that labour mobility is a key instrument for the efficient working of the internal market and invites Member States to take appropriate measures to emphasise flexicurity on the one hand and to protect workers' security on the other. It also calls on the Member States and stakeholders to consider and remove the obstacles to the

mobility of women workers, by providing, among other things, fair access to qualified jobs and high-level positions, equal pay, flexible working conditions, adequate healthcare and childcare services, good quality education facilities for children, portable pension rights, and ensuring the elimination of gender stereotypes. The following should also be promoted: special employment, training, educational, distance learning and language programmes to create a more women-friendly labour market and to enable the reconciliation of professional and family life.

Mobility and immigration: Parliament notes with concern certain moves by Member States **to alter their internal legal frameworks for immigration** and interpret and apply the principle of the free movement of labour in a manner that is contrary to the letter and spirit of the Community rules in force. It calls for an immediate end to such practices and encourages the Member States to introduce comprehensive schemes for the integration of Union citizens exercising their right of free movement on their territory, where appropriate, in cooperation with the Member States of origin. It calls on the Member States and the Commission to work together in order to draw up, implement, monitor and evaluate a programme of **social reintegration** for citizens and their families returning to their Member State of origin after a period spent working in another.

Recognition of qualifications: Parliament encourages the Member States to speed up the implementation of the common framework for qualifications (European Qualifications Framework – EQF). It considers that, while alignment with this reference system is due in 2010, its accelerated implementation in all Member States could reduce the obstacles currently facing workers. It also encourages educational authorities to work together pro-actively on the mutual recognition of qualifications – gained from formal, informal and non-formal education – and professions which correspond to the standards set by Member States. Parliament endorses the Commission's commitment to developing Europass in order to make qualifications more readable for employers and they stress the value of the Euraxess Services.

Social security: Parliament calls on the Commission, the Member States, and the two sides of industry to open discussions with a view to harmonising salary scales with the different levels of qualifications laid down in the EQF so as to enable labour mobility to be guaranteed by virtue of wage levels corresponding to workers' skills. It stresses the need for further progress in recognition and cumulation of social security entitlements and in the portability of pensions. They take the view that the portability of social security provisions is better coordinated on the basis of Regulations (EEC) No 1408/71 and (EC) No 883/2004 (applicable from 2009) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the coordination of social security systems, and bilateral agreements. Member States are urged to implement fully these Regulations, as well as related legislation on social security matters and the payment of allowances of any kind. They also call on the Member States and the Commission to urgently address the recurring problems raised in petitions and complaints concerning social security, pensions, and health care and support the Commission's plans for the introduction of an electronic version of the **European health insurance card** which includes all information relating to the contributions paid by and the social rights of the individual concerned in all Member States where that person has worked.

EURES: Parliament expresses its support for the contribution of the EURES network to facilitating workforce mobility in the EU. It supports the idea of transforming EURES into **a one-stop mobility information portal** which would operate as a centralised helpdesk where potentially mobile workers can obtain information about all aspects of job mobility – not only about job vacancies, social security, health care, pensions and the recognition of qualifications, but also about language issues, housing, employment for spouses, education for children and integration in general in the target state. It points out that, where appropriate, it should be expanded to the benefit of third-country nationals, including those who have not yet acquired long-term resident status. It considers that the **supplementary budget of EUR 2 million** allocated to innovative mobility projects up to 2013 **is too low**, given the need to inform as many Union citizens as possible about labour mobility in the Union and the objectives set out in the various programme documents in support of labour mobility in the Union.

Other instruments to promote mobility: Parliament calls on firms to support worker mobility, for example through flexible working hours and **tele-working**. The Commission is urged to seek instruments by means of which to eliminate the complex obstacles which can prevent workers from opting to work abroad, such as difficulty in finding work for one's partner or spouse, high relocation costs, language barriers, the risk of losing tax advantages or no longer being able to contribute to national pension, health insurance or unemployment insurance Schemes. SOLVIT is supported by the Parliament as an instrument for swift resolution of problems in the internal market and equally of problems related to worker mobility. It recommends that **more resources be made available to SOLVIT**.