

Resolution on implementation of the guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States 2008-2010

2009/2519(RSP) - 11/03/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of 19 February 2009, the European Parliament adopted by 548 votes to 74 with 31 abstentions, a resolution tabled by the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs on implementation of the guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States 2008-2010. in the face of a severe worldwide recession and a forecast increase in unemployment of at least 3.5 million in the EU by the end of 2009, Parliament believes that the **central goals of employment policy** must be:

- to preserve as many viable jobs as possible from the short-term failure of demand;
- to assist employment creation; and
- to support both the purchasing power of unemployed workers and their ability rapidly to re-gain employment.

It calls on the Commission to give a clear signal to Member States that the Employment Guidelines should be implemented in this spirit, and to tackle employment as a priority issue by putting proposals to the 2009 Spring European Council for a European Employment Initiative, with coordinated action by Member States to safeguard employment and create new jobs.

Parliament notes as a central dilemma in the current crisis that European economic policy instruments are not yet developed enough successfully to meet the challenges ahead. It requires an **update of the essential policy tools**, in particular the Integrated Guidelines, the Stability and Growth Pact, as well as the Sustainable Development Strategy, in order to integrate them under the umbrella of a New Deal for Smart Growth in the EU.

Parliament urges the Council to agree on short-term measures to safeguard the 2008 employment rate and to invest in the fight against climate change, and to call on the Member States and the social partners to ensure sufficient incomes with special regard to the most vulnerable groups of society. The Commission is asked to launch initiatives with respect to these goals in time for the Spring European Council. Members recall that coordinated investment by the Member States in the five core Lisbon goals – research, education, active labour market policies, childcare and incentives for private investment – must be a key element in employment policy.

Employment Guidelines 2008-2010: Parliament stresses the urgent need for a rigorous implementation. It wants Member States to report in their National Reform Plans on how to improve compliance with and implementation of the principles of European social legislation, agreements between the social partners and the fundamental principles of equal treatment and non-discrimination. In view of the severity of the economic crisis, the Commission must be prepared to take exceptional measures, including a widening of access to the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), which must be able to support workers in a wider range of situations, including temporary workers who have lost their jobs, and a temporary opening of the European Social Fund (ESF) to support employment preservation measures via training schemes.

Parliament stresses the importance of the following:

- the strengthening of EU measures to deal with restructuring, in particular the strengthening of information and consultation rights;
- the next reform of the EU Structural Funds to seek to focus the Funds' objectives more closely on the creation of sustainable, high-quality employment;
- education to increasing workers' employability also to improving their mobility, which is important for the functioning of the internal market;
- guideline 23 and of substantial investments in lifelong learning in order to lower the unemployment rate;
- the delivery of adult learning to raise participation;
- fulfilling objective of guideline 18, so that every young person who has left school should be offered, within 4 months, a job, apprenticeship, additional training or other employability measure;
- decisive action to combat the problem of low participation of women in the labour market;
- guideline 17 concerning the implementation of social and territorial cohesion to prevent deficiencies in this area;
- investments in the welfare sector, which needs to be maintained in order to prevent a decline in quality of community services and a rise in unemployment rates.

Parliament notes with regret that it is possible that during this time of economic crisis there may be some pressure on wages in some companies as a voluntary alternative to selective redundancies. It considers it important that:

- each Member State establish a policy of taking competition on the basis of poverty wages out of the market;
- collectively bargained agreements have a wide coverage;
- the hierarchy of collective agreements be respected;
- wages and working conditions, as laid out in collective agreements and/or labour law, be respected and implemented in practice.

Coordinated action: Parliament underlines the importance of proactive and coordinated investments across Member States, including in productive infrastructure, education and climate change, to achieve the goal of raising employment levels, and ensuring social cohesion. It stresses also the need to improve the quality of jobs available today.