Outcome of the European Council meeting, 18-19 June 2009

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The Council held a **policy debate** on the current economic and employment situation in Europe and discussed the measures already taken. It also considered the scope for further short-term and long-term responses in the light of the informal Employment Summit on 7 May 2009 and the recent Commission communication by way of preparation for the June 2009 European Council.

Against the background of the increasing unemployment rate in the EU, all ministers stressed the **importance of measures to maintain or create new jobs**. More specifically, they mentioned short-time work, training and the reduction of non-wage costs. At the same time, some delegations made it clear that companies which are not viable should not be supported.

Despite the need for short-term measures the Member States should **continue following the long-term objectives of the Lisbon and Employment strategies** and carry on with their structural reforms. In order to improve the entrepreneurial environment, ministers considered it important to **reduce the administrative burden on companies**, including where relevant non-wage costs, to increase mobility and to promote research and development. Some ministers expressed the expectation that new employment opportunities could be created through building a low-carbon economy ("green jobs"), as well as in the health and social sectors.

Ministers underscored the crucial importance **social security systems** have in mitigating the impact of the crisis, in particular with regard to the most vulnerable people such as the young, the old and disabled persons. Some delegations suggested increasing the security aspects in the implementation of the commonly agreed flexicurity principles. Furthermore, ministers emphasised the contribution the social dialogue could make to recovering from the crisis.

In general, ministers welcomed the Communication from the Commission to the June European Council: "A Shared Commitment for Employment", published on 3 June 2009, and in particular the proposed allocation of EUR 19 billion under the European Social Fund (ESF) to measures to help people to stay in work, or to move towards new jobs.