Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States. Part II of the Europe 2020 Integrated Guidelines

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The European Parliament adopted by 566 votes to 59, with 66 abstentions, a legislative resolution amending the proposal for a Council decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States (Part II of the Europe 2020 Integrated Guidelines).

The main amendment are as follows:

Improve existing policies: apart from new EU legislative initiatives with a social focus, the European Union needs to improve significantly its existing policies and their implementation. Member States' reform programmes should aim at fostering **employment-enhancing growth based on decent work as promoted by the ILO and "good work", as guiding principles**, which should govern both job creation and labour market integration. Equal treatment and equal pay for equal work at the same workplace should be safeguarded and strengthened. Particular attention should also be paid to **reducing poverty** among the increasing number of working poor, and to combating child poverty.

Open method of coordination: given the uneven progress made in implementing the Lisbon Strategy in different EU countries, Members state that there are increasing doubts as to the usefulness of the open method of coordination. This method needs to be improved so that it has a greater impact in terms of the implementation of the objectives that have been set.

Implementation of guidelines: when designing and implementing their national reform programmes taking account of the guidelines in the Annex, Member States shall ensure effective governance of employment and social policies. Stakeholders, including those at regional and local level and including those affected by the different aspects of Europe 2020 strategy, parliamentary bodies and social partners shall be **closely involved** throughout the design and implementation, monitoring and evaluation of those programmes, including in the definition of targets and indicators.

Parliament considers that the EU headline targets, as set out in the Annex, shall be followed up with appropriate **sub-targets and indicators**, including outcome and result indicators, as well as national targets, indicators and scoreboards. Member States shall take those targets and indicators into account, along with the guidelines and any country-specific recommendations addressed to them by the Council. Member States shall closely monitor the employment and social impact of reforms implemented under respective national reform programmes.

Parliament suggests clarifying the following guidelines:

Guideline 7: Creating more and better jobs, reducing unemployment and increasing labour market participation to 75% of the active population:

The Member States will set their national targets for increasing the employment rate for women and men to 75% by 2020, with the aim of reaching full employment, in particular through greater labour market participation of young people, older workers, the low-skilled and people with disabilities, minorities, in

particular the Roma and the better integration of legal migrants. Furthermore, Member States will set their national targets so that the share of 15 to 24 year-old women and men in education, training or employment increases to at least 90%.

Member States will **increase the employment rate by 10%, focusing on particular groups, by 2014**: (i) young people aged between 15 and 25 years; (ii) older workers aged between 50 and 64 years; (iii) women; (iv) unskilled workers; (v) people with disabilities; (vi) people with migrant backgrounds.

The rate of people who are long-term unemployed should be reduced by 10%.

To reach this goal, the Member States should in particular:

- promote growth, thereby creating new decent jobs, **increase the innovative potential** of the economy, in particular of **SMEs**,
- **improve women's and young people's access to the labour market**, by taking into account the demographic challenges, conditions should be created for adequate child care facilities, so that every child of pre-school age can be provided with child care outside the family, and every young person is provided with a real job or a place in training or further education within four months after finishing school, in close cooperation with the social partners;
- ensure that at least **25% of all long-term unemployed** participate in an active labour market measure in the form of advanced training, education and/or an occupational redeployment;
- **increase the employment rate** through activation measures, in particular for young people, low-skilled and people requiring particular protection and/or support, through advisory services and education and professional training adapted to the labour market's needs;
- **safeguard and strengthen equal treatment and equal pay** for equal work in the same workplace;
- increase the **employability of legal migrants** with appropriate programmes;
- continue efforts and innovative programmes to reintegrate people with **disabilities** into the labour market, including through subsidised jobs;
- remove the barriers which make it more difficult for people to enter the labour market for the first time, support the creation of jobs, foster social innovation and increase the quality and effectiveness of job placement services, including public employment services;
- support individual and collective forms of self-employment through **social economy**-type enterprises;
- take special measures against the dominance of women in poorly paid work and support the employment of women in **management posts**;
- effectively promote **flexicurity strategies** which should be better applied through active labour market policies;
- ensure that **new forms of employment** are not created at the expense of regular (full-time, permanent) contracts;
- **increase employability and job quality**: the resources of the European Social Fund should be fully used for this purpose;
- promote and invest in **social services of general interest** including employment, health and housing services which have to be funded sufficiently.

Guideline 8: Promoting job quality and lifelong learning, strengthening decent work and developing a skilled workforce.

The Member States will **set their national targets at reducing the school drop-out rate below 10% by 2020**, whilst increasing the share of the population aged 30-34 having completed tertiary or equivalent education to at least 40%.

The resolution highlights the need for high-quality initial education and attractive vocational training helping workers to adjust their skills to the labour market needs are high priorities for Member States. They must be completed with **second-chance opportunities** for young people aged especially between 25 and 35 which include an obligatory offer of educational and vocational training and effective incentives for lifelong learning.

Access to high-quality general and vocational training and the reintegration of school drop-outs in the education system should be possible for everyone at any time.

Guideline 8a: Strengthening social and economic cohesion policy in support of employment.

Member States commit themselves to arranging, complementing, coordinating and adjusting their national targets, within and among each other, in a way that imbalances in economic development between regions will be reduced. The Member States should invest more in transport, energy, telecommunication and IT infrastructure and make full use of the European Structural Funds. The participation of potential beneficiaries in Union cofounded programmes should be encouraged by simplification of delivery systems.

To achieve this, Member States should **create synergies between their cohesion policies and other existing sectoral policies**, in accordance with an integrated approach.

Guideline 9: Improving the performance of education and training systems at all levels and increasing participation in tertiary education.

It should be noted that the committee proposes to transfer the main objective as well as the recommendations of Guideline 9 in the Commission text to before the first paragraph of Guideline 8 in Parliament's amendment.

Guideline 10: Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty.

The Member States will set their national targets to reduce by 25 % the number of Europeans living below national poverty lines, lifting over 20 million people out of poverty, in particular by employment and education policy measures.

In order to pursue this objective, it is necessary to:

- create opportunities to participate in the labour market or to return to it for all social groups, irrespective of locality or level of education;
- strike a balance between giving people a sufficient sense of security and preserving their motivation to work and earn income. To achieve this target, Member States should make an effort to reduce poverty, including **in-work poverty**, promote full participation, at people's own choosing, in politics, society, the arts and the economy and extend employment opportunities, in regard to which the European Social Fund is to be used. In order to formulate specific objectives to combat poverty it must be made clear how poverty should be measured;
- tackle **child poverty** through appropriate measures so that children are not restricted in their personal development and are not underprivileged when entering professional life due to poverty related interferences of their free development;
- strengthen income security at various stages of life by ensuring **adequate minimum incomes** that should at least be above the poverty line, in accordance with the various practices, collective agreements and legislation in the Member States;
- strengthen and modernise **social protection systems**, including pensions and healthcare;
- improve **social protection of short-term contracts**, which affect women in particular, and pregnant women more particularly again, should be improved by Member States;

- put in place efficient approaches under **active labour market policy** for training and job creation have to be created for those who are excluded from the labour market owing to lack of training.

Lastly, Parliament reiterates its long-stranding call on the Commission and the Council to ensure that Parliament is given the necessary time, and in any event no less than five months, to fulfil its consultative role defined in Article 148(2) TFEU in respect of the revision of the guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States.