Resolution on implementation of the guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States

2011/2536(RSP) - 17/02/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution tabled by the Committee on employment and social affairs on implementation of the guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States.

Since the current economic crisis continues to pose challenges in the form of increasing unemployment and social exclusion, Parliament considers that there is an urgent need to **step up efforts at all levels to ensure that the employment guidelines are properly implemented**, with a view to increasing labour market participation, developing a skilled workforce, and improving the quality and performance of education and training systems.

Strengthen governance and raise ambitions in pursuing the Europe 2020 goals: in the light of the Commission's proposal to retain the employment policy guidelines adopted in 2010 for 2011, the recommendations on the National Reform Programmes have become the main macroeconomic surveillance and orientation tool. Members deplore the failure to **involve Parliament in this process** and the lack of debate concerning it.

Parliament considers that the Annual Growth Survey and the framework provided by the European Semester are crucial tools for the enhanced coordination of economic policies. However, these tools should be employed in a manner consistent with the need for democratic processes and support, and not serve to replace or diminish the importance of the broad economic policy guidelines and the guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States, with which Parliament must be closely involved and, on the latter, consulted. It urges the European Council, the Council and the Commission to ensure that the Europe 2020 strategy and the strengthened European economic governance system are **effective and democratically legitimate**, which makes the genuine and timely involvement of Parliament throughout the surveillance and policy coordination procedures essential. Member States should also involve more closely and regularly consult the national parliaments, the social partners, regional and local authorities and civil society. Noting the lack of ambition regarding Member States' national employment targets, Parliament calls on Member States to reconsider their national employment targets, so that the EU headline target can be me. Member States are asked to set national targets for specific sub-groups, such as young people, women, people with disabilities and older workers and to set their national targets on social inclusion and the fight against poverty.

Ensure that the employment guidelines are implemented: Parliament calls on the European Council **not to make employment issues secondary concerns** when considering the Commission's recommendation in the Annual Growth Survey to make rigorous fiscal consolidation the first priority for the 2011/2012 period. It emphasises the urgent need for the Member States to step up their efforts to deliver in all priority areas, including (i) increasing employment levels and reducing unemployment; (ii) exploiting the job potential of a new low-carbon economy; (iii) developing a skilled workforce, promoting job quality and lifelong learning, and (iv) facilitating the work-life balance. These efforts should be reflected in the final National Reform Programmes;

Step up action to deliver on more and better jobs: Parliament considers that much more emphasis must be given to job quality and decent work and to supply side-oriented economic policies in an effort to boost demand on the labour market. In that connection, efforts are needed to **make better use of the potential of younger people,** including early school leavers, women, the elderly, disadvantaged and disabled people, migrants and members of ethnic minorities, including the Roma. Member States are called upon to:

- adapt their labour markets to the needs and skills of these groups at every stage of their lives;
- continue developing the policies needed to bring more women on to and keep them on the labour market;
- attach due importance to the provision of high-quality education and training and to lifelong learning and the recognition of qualifications;
- invest more in facilitating occupational and geographical mobility;
- enhance the tools needed to analyse labour markets needs and reforming the education and training systems which can help to overcome skills mismatches.

The resolution emphasises the importance of employment policies that contribute to job creation, for example through support for SMEs and self-employment and the promotion of entrepreneurship.

Act decisively to deliver in fighting poverty and social exclusion: Member States must take action now to deliver on the commitments made to increase employment levels, improve people's skills, create job opportunities, reduce poverty and enhance social inclusion. Parliament calls on Member States to make sure that **social protection systems** continue to provide adequate support and play their part in safeguarding and improving skills and employability. It emphasises that **more effective exchanges of best practice** and experience between Member States in the area of the fight against social exclusion and poverty reduction are vital and would help to facilitate the achievement of the Europe 2020 poverty reduction targets.