Resolution on a Council recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market

2015/2820(RSP) - 29/10/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution tabled by the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs on a Council recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market.

Parliament noted that, as a result of the economic crisis, long-term unemployment had doubled since 2007 and accounted for half of total unemployment, or more than 12 million people, representing 5 % of the EU's active population. Over 60 % of the long-term unemployed had been out of work for at least two consecutive years in 2014. Accordingly, it welcomed the Commission's initiative of proposing a Council recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market, but also stressed that an **earlier release of the proposal, and agreement in the Council, could have prevented part of the long-term unemployment** observed today. Members expressed concern that a Council recommendation might not be sufficient to redress swiftly the situation of the long-term unemployed, and encouraged the Member States to deliver. The latter were asked to **match EU funding – in particular through the European Social Fund – of their national policies** to tackle long-term unemployment. Parliament stressed that the budgetary constraints faced by some Member States (especially those under Economic Adjustment Programmes) must not prevent the swift implementation of the recommendation. It called on the Commission to explore **options for quick access to EU funding** and to mobilise additional resources where possible, as was done in the case of the Youth Employment Initiative.

Parliament supported the **three main components of the proposal**: (i) ambitiously stepping up the registration of the long-term unemployed through an employment service aiming at full coverage; (ii) assessing the individual potential, needs and job preferences of the longterm unemployed before they reach 18 months of unemployment; and (iii) offering a tailor-made, balanced and comprehensible 'job integration agreement' between the long-term unemployed and the services involved, at the latest by the time the person concerned reaches 18 months of unemployment. However, the resolution stressed that an **individual assessment should take place before the person reaches 12 months of unemployment**, so as to ensure that the job integration agreement could be put in place before they reach 18 months of unemployment.

For the **effective implementation of the recommendation**, Members considered that close cooperation between the Commission and the Member States, and at national level between the (sectoral) social partners, civil society organisations, local and regional authorities, public and private employment services, social and health care providers, and local and regional education and training institutes, was paramount, as is the active involvement of employers in order to better understand business requirements and needs.

Lastly, Parliament welcomed the Commission's suggestion of establishing, through the European Semester and the Employment Committee, **multilateral surveillance of the implementation of the recommendation**. This surveillance must be thorough and, if necessary, be followed up by instructions in the Member States' country-specific recommendations. The Commission was asked to facilitate mutual learning processes that bring together those Member States with high rates of long-term unemployment and those that had been successful in quickly reintegrating the (longterm) unemployed into their labour markets.