Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States in 2016

2016/0043(NLE) - 15/02/2016 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to confirm, for 2016, the validity of the guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the Council adopts the act after consulting the European Parliament but without being obliged to follow its opinion.

BACKGROUND: the Treaty on the functioning of the EU provides that Member States are to regard their economic policies and promoting employment as matters of common concern and coordinate them within the Council. In two distinct articles, it provides that the Council is to adopt broad economic policy guidelines (Article 121) and employment guidelines (Article 148), specifying that the latter must be consistent with the former.

Given this legal basis, the guidelines for employment and economic policies are presented as two distinct — but intrinsically interconnected — legal instruments:

- a Council Recommendation on broad guidelines for the economic policies of the Member States and of the Union -Part I of the Europe 2020 Integrated Guidelines;
- a Council Decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States -Part II of the Europe 2020 Integrated Guidelines.

These guidelines implemented by the above mentioned legal instruments form together the integrated guidelines for implementing the Europe 2020 strategy.

The employment guidelines were adopted on 5 October 2015. The overall objectives and priorities expressed in the guidelines for the employment policies remain valid and their validity for 2016 needs to be confirmed by a Council decision.

CONTENT: the proposal for a decision provides that **the guidelines for Member States' employment policies** as set out in the Annex to Council Decision of 5 October 2015 on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States4 are maintained for 2016 and shall be taken into account by the Member States in their employment policies.

The examination of the Member States' National Reform Programmes contained in the Joint Employment Report shows that Member States should continue to make every effort to **address the priority areas of**:

- increasing labour market participation and reducing structural unemployment,
- developing a skilled workforce responding to labour market needs and promoting job quality and lifelong learning,
- improve the performance of education and training systems at all levels and increasing participation in tertiary education,
- promoting social inclusion and combating poverty.