Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States

2021/0137(NLE) - 02/06/2021 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to adopt guidelines for Member States' employment policies for 2021.

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 Broad Economic Policy Guidelines and the Employment Policy Guidelines were adopted jointly for the first time in 2010 to support the Europe 2020 strategy.

The integrated guidelines remained stable until 2014. Revised guidelines were adopted in 2015. In 2018, they were aligned with the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights proclaimed in November 2017 by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, with the aim of driving reforms at national level and serving as a compass for a renewed process of convergence across Europe. The Guidelines remained unchanged in 2019.

In 2020, they were aligned to incorporate elements related to the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis, the green and digital transitions and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Alongside the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines, the Employment Guidelines are presented annually in the form of a Council Decision and serve as the basis for country-specific recommendations in the different policy areas.

CONTENT: the proposal provides that the **guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States**, which are annexed to Council Decision (EU) 2020/1512, **are maintained for 2021** and must be taken into account by the Member States in their employment policies and reform programmes.

The ‘Employment Guidelines’ are the following:

- **Guideline 5**: Boosting the demand for labour.

- **Guideline 6**: Enhancing labour supply and improving access to employment, skills and competences.

- **Guideline 7**: Enhancing the functioning of labour markets and the effectiveness of social dialogue.

- **Guideline 8**: Promoting equal opportunities for all, fostering social inclusion and fighting poverty.

The proposal stresses that the EU and its Member States should:

- combat social exclusion and discrimination and promote social justice and protection, as well as gender equality, solidarity between generations and the protection of children's rights;

- ensure that economic and employment policies go hand in hand with Europe's transition to a climate neutral, environmentally sustainable and digital economy, improving competitiveness, ensuring adequate working conditions, fostering innovation, promoting social justice and equal opportunities, as well as tackling inequalities and regional disparities;

- work together to effectively address structural factors such as climate change and environmental challenges, globalisation, digitalisation, artificial intelligence, teleworking, the platform economy and demographic change, and adapt existing systems as necessary;

- adopt appropriately sequenced reforms to enhance economic growth, quality job creation and productivity, provide adequate working conditions, increase social and territorial cohesion, foster upward convergence and resilience and promote fiscal responsibility;

- ensure that labour market reforms, including national wage-setting mechanisms, respect national social dialogue practices, with a view to ensuring fair wages for a decent standard of living and sustainable growth;

- ensure that the social, employment and economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis is mitigated.