Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States

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The European Parliament adopted by 363 votes to 233, with 35 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a Council decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States.

Parliament approved the Commission's proposal subject to amendments and called on the Commission to amend its proposal accordingly. It reiterated its request to be involved in setting the Integrated Guidelines at Union level on an equal footing with Council in order to strengthen democratic decision-making.

Guideline 5: Boosting the demand for labour

Parliament stressed that Member States should:

- promote **full employment based on a competitive, innovative and sustainable social market economy** and support investment in quality job creation;

- implement smart, ambitious and inclusive employment policies to anticipate labour market shortages, in order to harness the potential of the digital and ecological transitions;

- provide business support for hiring and promote vocational education and training (VET), responsible entrepreneurship and genuine self-employment, especially among women, young people, older people and other disadvantaged groups;

- fully implement the Social Economy Action Plan and the European Green Deal and promote the development of the **social, green and digital economy**;

- adapt their employment policies and coordinate at EU level the implementation of best practice on temporary measures to protect workers and labour markets in times of crisis, involving the social partners;

- support the transformation of crucial economic sectors ensuring self-sufficiency and strategic autonomy.

National taxation should support employment and inclusive growth in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and the climate and environmental objectives of the European Green Deal. Tax reforms should take into account of their distributive effect of the tax system and protect revenue for public investment.

Members stressed the importance of policies to ensure that **wages** provide a decent standard of living, including for disadvantaged groups, to combat in-work poverty. They also added that recipients of Union funds should respect applicable Union and national law on social and labour rights and taxation.

Guideline 6: Enhancing labour supply and improving access to employment, lifelong acquisition of skills and competences

In the context of digital and green transitions, demographic change and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, as well as the rising cost of living, Member States should in particular:

- **promote social rights, sustainability, productivity, employability and investment** in the development of workers and individuals by fostering the acquisition of lifelong skills and competences, in particular digital skills;

- addressing the needs of sectors and regions suffering from **structural labour market and skills shortages**;

- encouraging enterprises to **invest in the skills of their staff** and to offer decent working and employment conditions to attract qualified workers;

- use all available resources from the ESF+ and other EU programmes and instruments, such as Next Generation EU, to develop the skills of young people;

- promote decent working conditions and potential adjustments through continuous reskilling and upskilling, strengthening of social protection systems and services, and provision of integrated guidance and counselling services, as well as active labour market policies;

- supporting job creation and investing in **social protection systems**, especially for people with disabilities and workers who have difficulties in upgrading their skills or retraining, as well as helping low-skilled adults to access the labour market and stable, quality employment.

The right to **paid educational leave** for professional purposes should be promoted, as should fair, effective and universal access to distance learning.

Members stressed the need to provide effective, coordinated and personalised support for **jobseekers**, to tackle youth unemployment and precarious youth employment as a priority, and to ensure decent working conditions and access to social protection for interns, trainees and apprentices.

The resolution suggested the implementation of a youth clause assessing the impact on young people for new initiatives in all policy areas.

The **length of maternity and parental leave** should be adequately valued in the context of contributions and pension rights. Progress should also be made towards fully paid maternity and paternity leave of equal duration.

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

The Commission and Member States should take concrete steps to **promote and strengthen collective bargaining and social dialogue**. Members stressed the protection of workers' rights, a high level of social protection and job security, inclusive recruitment, health and safety at work, as well as well adapted working environments for all workers.

Member States should (i) support **labour mobility** across the EU to overcome regional and sectoral labour market shortages, while tackling the negative effects of 'brain drain' in certain regions; (ii) ensure **decent rights and working and employment conditions** for all those engaged in cross-border activity, as well as the portability of social security rights (iii) work towards the coordination of social protection for mobile workers, including the self-employed; (iv) ensure that employers comply with **health and safety regulations**; (v) address and anticipate the impact of current and future labour market crises, including in the context of the climate emergency.

Member States should support labour mobility throughout the Union to overcome regional and sectoral labour market shortages and make use of the full potential of the Union's labour market, while effectively tackling the negative impact of the 'brain-drain' in certain regions.

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

Members called for greater efforts to combat poverty and social exclusion, with a **cross-cutting strategy** to tackle in-work poverty, fuel and transport poverty, food poverty and homelessness. They proposed to increase the budget of the European Child Guarantee to at least EUR 20 billion. All Member States should allocate more than 5% of their ESF+ funds to the fight against child poverty.

In the light of the COVID crisis, Member States should ensure equal and effective **access to sustainable preventive and curative public health care**, in particular mental health care and high quality long-term care.

Lastly, **pension reforms** should be based on active ageing through optimising opportunities for workers of all ages to work in good quality conditions to remain productive and healthy until the statutory retirement age. At the same time, workers who wish to remain active after reaching retirement age should have the opportunity to do so.