

Employment: Community incentive measures

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The Conciliation Committee reached agreement on the text of the decision on Community incentive measures in the field of employment. The main points of the compromise were as follows: - provision was made for specific information measures to increase the general awareness of the European Employment Strategy. Furthermore, all relevant documents including the national action plans on employment and their evaluations will have to be accessible to the general public; - regional and local actors will be kept abreast of the strategy. In addition, at local and regional level, there will be exchanges of experience, studies into any innovative measures and other steps to ensure implementation of the strategy. In a declaration attached to the agreement, the Commission underlined the importance of innovative measures under Article 6 of the European Social Fund (ESF) in order to implement the European Employment Strategy at local level. The Commission will ensure the necessary synergies with the ESF and keep the European Parliament informed of the priorities chosen; - regarding the budget for the programme, the two sides reached a compromise providing for the funding to be increased from the EUR 50 m proposed by the Council to EUR 55 m. Although at 2nd reading Parliament had proposed that funding be increased to EUR 65m, it accepted this much lower increase in the context of the overall package.