Employment: overview and political assessment of the implementation of the 2001 guidelines. Joint report

2001/2168(COS) - 12/09/2001 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : to present a draft Joint Employment Report 2001. CONTENT : the present Joint Employment Report provides an overview of the employment situation and a political assessment of the progress made by Member States in the implementation of the 2001 Employment Guidelines, and highlights the remaining challenges for the Member States. The European Employment Strategy is a major contribution to the wider political agenda defined for the European Union at the Lisbon Summit in Spring 2000, and since confirmed by the Nice and Stockholm European Councils. In line with the general economic performance, the employment performance in the European Union was exceptional in 2000. GDP growth of 3.3% and labour productivity growth of 1.6% were accompanied by the creation of 3 million new jobs and a reduction in unemployment to 8.3%, a level close to that prevailing in the early 1990s. The report highlights that the year 2000 saw the strongest employment growth for ten years, with 3 million new jobs created. The employment rate thus increased from 62.3% in 1999 to 63.3% in 2000, bringing the EU closer to the Lisbon target. For the third year in a row, more full time jobs than part-time jobs were created in 2000. Full time jobs accounted for almost 70% of the net jobs created, up from 60% in 1999 and 54% in 1998. Among the jobs created more than 1.6 million of the new jobs were taken by women, whose employment rate grew from 52.8% in 1999 to 54% in 2000. High-tech and knowledge-intensive sectors drove job creation, contributing to more than 60% of total job creation between 1995 and 2000. However, the report points out that there remains structural weaknesses, in particular, the unemployment level remains high notably amongst young people (16.3% of active young people). There is also an important gender gap in terms of employment, unemployment and occupational segregation. The report also notes a low employment rate of older workers. Lastly, GDP growth is forecast to slow down in 2001 and 2002, and the EU economy will not offer the same supportive environment for improvements on the employment front.