New proposals for the European employment strategy

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report drawn up by Thomas MANN (EPP-ED, D) in response to the Commission communication on the future of the European Employment Strategy (EES). It welcomed the Commission's new focus on a few overarching priorities, while at the same time making a number of recommendations aimed at enhancing the new strategy: - practical measures should be taken to achieve uniform rules in financial and capital markets in Europe to strengthen confidence among investors and hence their willingness to invest, which in turn would boost growth and employment; - the Council and Commission should make more use of the open coordination method in the field of social protection; - the Commission should submit initiatives for employment-friendly taxation, taking into account national traditions. Sectors of importance for job creation and social inclusion should be treated more favourably in terms of taxes and social security contributions; - in view of the importance of SMEs for high-quality job creation, Member States should improve the business environment by cutting red tape, making venture capital available at favourable rates of interest, establishing regional and local partnerships for the establishment of new SMEs, etc.; - to combat the rapid growth of the hidden economy, Member States should provide incentives to promote declared employment; - companies should adopt a comprehensive social approach rather than a purely profit-based one; - to enable the social partners to be fully involved in preparing the annual Spring Summit, a Tripartite Social Summit should be established as an official body that could meet before the Spring Summit; - to ensure greater participation of civil society in the EES, representative NGOs should be involved in the preparation and evaluation of the National Action Plans; - in view of the enormous labour market potential of the ICT sector, IT courses should be made an integral part of the curriculum; - future guidelines should focus to a greater extent on investing in human resources, through education, training and specialisation measures; - further measures should be taken to improve female employment, e.g. by making it easier to reconcile working and family life, and to eradicate gender-based pay disparities; - access to the labour market for disadvantaged groups should be improved; - the applicant countries should be given active assistance by the Commission in establishing infrastructures to prepare them for the EES.