Employment: guidelines for Member States' policies, review. Employment package

2003/0068(CNS) - 21/05/2003

The committee adopted the report by Herman SCHMID (EUL/NGL, S) broadly approving the proposal, subject to a number of amendments (consultation procedure). MEPs supported the three main goals of the European Employment Strategy (full employment, increased productivity and better jobs, and greater social cohesion and 'inclusion') but said that a fourth goal should be added, namely, mainstreaming of male-female equality, which was a key factor requiring extra measures. While the committee acknowledged that full employment should be the ultimate goal, it stressed the need for substantial reductions in unemployment rates, arguing that employment levels and unemployment rates are objectives which are to some extent independent of each other. MEPs therefore called for overall targets to be set not only for full employment but also for the unemployment rate. Like the Commission in its proposal, the committee highlighted the importance of boosting job creation and fostering entrepreneurship. It added, however, that it was important not only to create jobs but also to create better jobs. MEPs emphasised the importance of local and regional employment markets, which tend to be less sensitive to short-term economic cycles and macro-economic fluctuations, and called for active measures to reduce local and regional disparities. Since the Member States are responsible for implementing the employment guidelines, the committee stressed the need to improve the legitimacy and implementation of the European strategy by involving national parliaments in discussions on and the adoption of national employment plans.