Community structural policy and employment

1996/2057(COS) - 20/03/1996 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE: the Commission communication seeks to analyse the impact of structural assistance on employment. SUBSTANCE: the Commission stresses that, with a budget of ECU 170 000 million (including the Cohesion Fund) for the period 1994-1999, the Structural Funds have an important role to play in promoting employment, mainly in the Member States and regions where they are concentrated. The impact of structural assistance on employment varies depending on the objective: - for objective 1 regions, priority is given to job creation principally by promoting growth to reduce gaps in per capita GNP. The aim is to establish an economic base for sustainable development which will create jobs over the long term using, amongst other means, increased education, training, research and technological innovation; - for objective 2 regions, the priority is diversification and revitalization of a declining industrial fabric, principally by a declining industrial fabric by seeking the most immediate possible impact on employment. In this connection, the trend of redirecting aid to the productive sector (particularly SMU) rather than infrastructures should prove beneficial for employment; - for objective 5(a) (fisheries), the Commission believes that the FIFG will help create 750 new jobs in Italy and 1100 in Germany by 1999, but that its main contribution will be to safeguarding existing jobs, which are seriously threatened; - for objective 5(b), assistance to employment concentrates mainly on the diversification of activities with a view to safeguarding existing jobs. However, the bulk of jobs created have been in other activities and sectors, such as tourism, small businesses, services and the environment. - for objectives 3 and 4, the main aim of these measures, which by their nature are directly linked to employment, is to bring demand into line with supply and so place people in the jobs available. Although the impact of these measures can only be assessed on a case-by-case basis, it may be estimated that some 11 million people will benefit in 1994-1999. The Commission proposes adjustments to improve the impact of structural impact on employment within existing programming. With this in view, it lays down the following guidelines: 1. Providing the conditions for long-term economic growth; greater importance should be given to intangible investment by promoting research, development and the organization of businesses, particularly small businesses, which are open to innovation, and the improvement of human resources through education and training. Measures to support technical innovation must also be given particular attention. 2. Increasing the job intensity of economic growth by devoting particularly attention to: - the employment question when financing infrastructure and productive investment; - compensating wherever appropriate for changes required by the modernization of the productive sector (eg. by providing support for integrated approaches to rural development designed to develop products or sectors that are not exposed to international competition or only exposed to a small extent); - encouraging dynamic reorganization of work and working time where this is accompanied by an increase in employment; - fostering environmentally sound growth. 3. Promoting a more active approach to economic and social solidarity, including equal opportunities: the aim is to give priority to active policies rather than merely handing out benefits to the unemployed and to link unemployment benefits to a greater extent to training actions and the acquisition of new skills. This means improving the quality of employment services and introducing arrangements to integrate guidance, training, counselling and employment aid to make it easier for job seekers and the underprivileged to find work; 4. Developing and enriching the partnership in the context of structural assistance; in this context, the participation of all the parties concerned should be increased in order to achieve triple value added: economic, financial and political. The Commission has found that the political, economic and social partnership is not fully exploited, including at the level of national authorities. The mobilization of local authorities, social partners, non-profit-making associations and businesses is still inadequate and needs to be stepped up. In conclusion, the Commission believes that the active measures derived from the guidelines set out call for a concerted effort by all those involved in the implementation of structural assistance to achieve these objectives, it proposes establishing, in the context of the structural policies, territorial partnerships for employment, involving the public and private sectors.