Employment: guidelines for member States' policies for the year 2002

2001/0208(CNS) - 18/02/2002 - Implementing legislative act

This Council Recommendation is an overall assessment of EU Member State's employment policies over the past two years, examining the strengths and weaknesses of each and offering recommendations for improvements. In addition to offering an assessment of the currently prevailing employment conditions (covering, inter alia, tax burdens, rate of employment amongst women, life-long learning opportunities etc.) Member States' application of the 2001 guidelines are examined. Where a particular weakness in an individual Member States' employment policy appears the Recommendation offers advice on how to improve this weakness; suggesting where an employment guideline may require further attention so as to rectify inherent fault-lines. Beginning in alphabetical order the Recommendation begins by assessing a Member States' problems in employment performance. This calculates variously, the percentage of the overall employment rate (and whether this complies with the Lisbon targets set in 2000); women in the work place; long-term unemployment prospects; participation of older workers; strengths and weaknesses in long-term learning projects; overall tax burden etc. Secondly, the document offers advice, based on the employment guidelines, on how a particular Member State could introduce reforms to improve their overall performance. Whilst some countries are already registering figures in line with the Lisbon objectives and with others on the right track (e.g. Portugal, Finland, Austria) others still are clearly failing. The Recommendation therefore, whilst recognising that many Member States are already prioritising the implementation of the EU established guidelines, urges the rapid implementation and adoption of the guidelines in full. Only in this way, it is argued, can the objective of creating a fully dynamic, knowledge based economy be truly realised.