Employment. Joint report 1999

1999/2139(COS) - 04/11/1999 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The Parliament adopted its resolution drafted by Mr. Winfried MENRAD (EPP, D) concerning the Commission's draft Joint Employment Report. The Parliament calls on the Commission and the Council to improve the relationship between the broad economic guidelines with regard to their content, their timing and the relationship between the Council committees involved. It also calls on the Council to adopt, unamended, the Commission's draft recommendations on the implementation of Member States' employment policies and on the Member States to take these recommendations into account, as a matter of priority, in their National Action Plans. The EP believes that it would be useful for it to participate in developing the employment policy guidelines and, jointly with the Commission, monitor implementation of the European employment initiatives in the Member States. With respect to co-ordination between employment and economic policy, the Parliament expects that it should have full recognition and closer involvement within the exisiting institutional framework in developing and implementing the European Employment Pact, and its full involvement in macroeconomic dialogue - if appropriate, also by means of an Interinstitutional Agreement. On the subject of active measures to create jobs, the EP points out that there are clear distinctions between direct and indirect measures by Member States to promote the labour market; it expects Member States to pursue their employment policies in a more balanced manner. With respect to the Guidelines, it calls on the Member States to involve the two sides of industry more closely in the process of implementing the employment policy guidelines; it strongly supports the proposal for a new guideline on communication and information technology, and points out that this is a clear example, in view of its implementation, of the need to boost public and private investment in a more pro-active way; it takes the view that the concept of lifelong learning needs to be strengthened in the guidelines and calls on the Commission to devise verifiable minimum targets for participation by the labour force of the different age groups of both sexes in further training; it requests the Member States to gear their training systems more closely to the requirements of the labour market and it calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop feasible alternatives to taxation on labour. In relation to the employment strategy and social protection, the Parliament believes that the link between employment, quality of job creation and social protection must be strengthened in the framework of the Luxembourg strategy; it calls for common minimum social standards not only with regard to terms of employment but also in various other areas of employment and socialm legislation and calls on the Member States, if the retirement age is raised by an amendment to the social security legislation applicable to unemployed workers, to ensure that the latter enjoy precedence in employment programmes, so that they do not remain deprived of both employment and pensions. With respect to equality of opportunity and mainstreaming, theParliament calls upon the Council and the Member States to: - enhance national capacities and strengthen legal and institutional frameworks for mainstreaming gender into employment policies; - set targets that measure the inclusion of women in training programmes; - develop a set of benchmarks and criteria for the implementation and evaluation of gender mainstreaming in national employment policies; - create benefit incentives that encourage female participation, by extending availability of parental and child care benefits, and taking child care costs into account in means testing of benefits to low income families. Concerning evaluation, the Parliament expects the Commission and the Member States to formulate the targets in such a way as to permit evaluation and repeats its call, in view of the proposals submitted by the Commission, for comparability of national statistics in order to facilitate uniform appraisal and appropriate monitoring of application of the employment policy guidelines. It also calls on the Commission and the Member States to make their statistical systems relating to employment factors comparable by the start of the year 2000, in order to enable implementation of the employment guidelines to be uniformly evaluated and properly monitored.