Employment policy: guidelines for strengthening the implementation of the European strategy

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The European Parliament adopted the report by Marie-Thérèse HERMANGE (EPP-ED, F) on the guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States subject to amendments. The amendments are as follows: - facilitating the access of unemployed young people to their first job and also the employment /continuance in employment of older people and making work a real option for all; investing more and more effectively in human capital as well as in research and development and lifelong learning; and ensuring effective implementation of reforms through better governance; - the conclusions of the Employment Task Force, which are important, should be taken on board by the Member States when implementing the Employment Guidelines, namely with a view in particular to improving the adaptability of workers and attracting and retaining more people in the work place and investing in skills and lifelong learning. These conclusions should be incorporated instead of new objectives being continually set or existing ones amended. In such a way, the European Union should confront Member States when they under-perform and urge Member States to focus on implementing what has already been agreed; - the European Employment Strategy requires enhanced and improved democratic involvement. To succeed in this, governments need to take concrete measures to mobilise the support and participation of the various stakeholders, and convince the public of the need for reforms. Furthermore, greater efforts should be made to demonstrate to the general public why reform is necessary and why it is in the interest and to the advantage of all; - Member States' performance in respect of the Employment Guidelines should be assessed and measured rigorously so as to ensure absolute validity and reliability of the Guidelines; - to promote economic and social cohesion, the guidelines for employment should also, through the European Social Fund, have the aim of reducing regional disparities in terms of jobs and unemployment, and combating de-industrialisation and relocations outside the Member States, while positively supporting economic and social reconversion, yet without neglecting to back up the development of the most dynamic areas; - in the current context of international competition and globalised trade, the European Employment Strategy should encourage companies to anticipate economic and technological change. Member States should encourage the development of research and support the dissemination of innovation in European enterprises. In this spirit, the European institutions will support initiatives to enable platforms of excellence to be set up between researchers and enterprises. They will encourage subject-based initiatives within the framework of the European programmes ; - in the context of financial allocation, the European institutions should provide support in a spirit not just of assistance but also of economic dynamism. Thus the European institutions should do their utmost to avoid adding complexity to the Member States" policies and on the contrary play a facilitating role. They will endeavour to make procedures for access to European funding simpler and more flexible, and to promote linkages between the various Community programmes.