Employment policy: guidelines for 2005-2008

2005/0057(CNS) - 02/06/2005

The Council agreed on a general approach to the proposal for a Decision on Guidelines for the Employment Policies of the Member States (2005-2008).

The general approach covered the following guidelines:

• Implement employment policies aiming at achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion;

• Promote a lifecycle approach to work;

• Ensure inclusive labour market, enhance work attractiveness, and make work pay for job-seekers, including disadvantaged people, and the inactive;

• Improve matching of labour market needs;

• Promote flexibility combined with employment security and reduce labour market segmentation, having due regard to the role of the social partners;

• Ensure employment-friendly labour cost developments and wage-setting mechanisms;

• Expand and improve investment in human capital;

• Adapt education and training systems in response to new competence requirements.

These guidelines should guide Member States' employment policies in addressing the following three priorities:

1) The need to attract and retain more people in employment, increase labour supply and modernise social protection systems;

2) The need to improve the adaptability of workers and enterprises;

3) The need to increase investment in human capital through better education and skills.

Following the guidelines issued by the 2005 Spring European Council, the proposal for a Decision on employment guidelines is one of the elements of the proposal for Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs. The outcome of the Council's proceedings will be submitted to the June European Council for approval. The Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs will serve as the basis for the national reform programmes to be submitted by Member States by Autumn 2005.