

Quarterly statistics on Community job vacancies

2007/0033(COD) - 12/03/2007 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to establish a legal basis for the collection of quarterly statistics on Community job vacancies.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

CONTENT: national data on job vacancies and posts occupied have been collected since 2003 under a gentlemen's agreement. Even though this agreement initially proved useful, experience has shown that it is not capable of meeting users' needs.

For the quarterly data collection, neither the ECB requirements in terms of coverage, timeliness and harmonisation, nor the Commission's demand for structural data are being satisfied. For the time being only a very limited number of countries are transmitting annual data, with a very heterogeneous level of detail and reduced comparability.

A legal basis provides for a mechanism to achieve a comparable methodological basis for a significant set of short-term and structural statistics within a clear time frame. The development of an appropriate European legal framework was also requested by the Ecofin Council in the Status Report on Information Requirements in EMU of November 2005. In addition, a number of Member States need a legal basis in order to be able to continue with the collection of data on job vacancies.

Written consultation and discussions in working groups have been conducted with authorised delegates representing the Member States of the National Statistical System in the Labour Market Working Group meetings held in October 2005 and March 2006. The proposal for a Regulation was presented to the Statistical Programme Committee (SPC) for an opinion in May 2006. In summary, the SPC expressed its general support for the proposal as regards quarterly statistics. However, Member States had strong reservations about the scope and the level of detail of the annual breakdowns.

Following the SPC opinion, the Regulation was amended, in particular in relation to the collection of annual structural data, which are now excluded from this legal text.

The revised proposal for a Regulation of the EP/Council has the broad support of the Directors-General of the National Statistical Offices and the ECB. All Member States agreed on the importance of having a clear and appropriate legal framework for the collection of quarterly job vacancy data. The policy need for annual structural job vacancy statistics will continue to be dealt with in the short term on a gentlemen's agreement basis. In the medium term, and based on the experience of the regulation on quarterly data, consideration should be given to the possibility of a new regulation to cope with the demands for annual data.

The intention of this legal basis is to establish a legal framework to cover current and identifiable future activities in the field of quarterly job vacancy statistics. This includes, in particular, guaranteeing a harmonised data collection to satisfy the demand from users in this area. The proposal for a Regulation respects the principles set out in the European Statistics Code of Practice, in particular the principle of cost-effectiveness, and special measures have been taken to minimise the burden on businesses and National Statistical Offices. The EP/Council Regulation needs to be complemented by an implementing regulation.

The financial provisions included in the Regulation should help Member States during the start-up phase to launch new statistics in this area or to complete work already undertaken under the gentlemen's agreement to improve the quality of short-term data collections and to meet users' requirements.

The financing will be covered by the Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity – PROGRESS, adopted by Decision 1672/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council. The budgetary impact in commitment and payment appropriations related to these actions has been estimated at **EUR 4.5 million for the period 2008-2010**.