Basic information

2002/2147(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Employment: qualifications and mobility, programme of action **Subject** 4.15.04 Workforce, occupational mobility, job conversion, working conditions	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	BASTOS Regina (PPE-DE)	19/03/2002

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ITRE Industry, External Trade, Research, Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
CULT Culture, Youth, Education, Media and Sport	IIVARI Ulpu (PSE)	23/05/2002
FEMM Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities	EVANS Jill (V/ALE)	10/07/2002

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs	2431	2002-06-03
Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs	2415	2002-03-07

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
13/02/2002	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2002)0072	Summary
07/03/2002	Debate in Council		

03/06/2002	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
01/07/2002	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
11/09/2002	Vote in committee		Summary
11/09/2002	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0313/2002	
09/10/2002	Debate in Parliament		
10/10/2002	Decision by Parliament	T5-0466/2002	Summary
10/10/2002	End of procedure in Parliament		
20/11/2003	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2002/2147(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148 Rules of Procedure EP 050
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	EMPL/5/16360

Employment: qualifications and mobility, programme of action

2002/2147(COS) - 13/02/2002 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : to propose an Action Plan for skills and mobility in the European Union. CONTENT: the Action Plan proposed by the Commission is the culmination of the process launched in February 2001 by the Commission's Communication on the New European Labour Markets (see COS/2001 /2084), the conclusions of the Stockholm European Council of March 2001and the work of the High Level Task Force on Skills and Mobility. This Action Plan puts forward a coherent political vision to promote human resources in the Union in accordance with the Lisbon goals, primarily create opportunities for citizens to more around the Union for educational and professional purposes, and make it easier for them to take advantage of the benefits of European integration, including the European single market. Three fundamental challenges are highlighted in the Action Plan to promote the objectives of European labour markets being made more open and accessible: 1) expand occupational professional mobility : in this context, education and training systems should be adapted, boosting life long learning and skills acquisition (particularly skills in information and communication technologies - ICT) and to improve systems to recognise qualifications and competences; 2) increase geographic mobility : low levels of geographic mobility within and between Member States suggest that the benefits of the internal market are not yet explored, for example in terms of dealing with skills bottlenecks or labour imbalances. Many obstacles still exist, including deficiencies in language skills, family circumstances, as well as in relation to taxes, pensions, social security and related issues. Furthermore, a declining EU workforce due to demographic changes suggest that immigration of third country nationals would also help satisfy some of the skill needs; 3) facilitate access to mobility : deficiencies in access to and the quality of information on mobility and individual sectors deter many people from considering a job move or particular career choice. The objectives and the action set out in the Action Plan are designed to address these challenges : - firstly, they aim to expand occupational mobility and skills development, by ensuring that education and training systems become more responsive to the labour market, competence development strategies for workers are drawn up, learning is recognised wherever it is acquired and qualifications are more easily transferable, and by more human resource investment in less advanced regions; - secondly, facilitating geographical mobility calls the removal of administrative and legal barriers where they still exist (for example through a universal health card); - thirdly, improving information provisions means setting up a One-Stop mobility information site, improving the effectiveness of the EURES jobs vacancy systems and launching mobility information campaign. Implementing the various actions needed to achieve the objectives will require responsibility and commitment from a range of actors, Member States, the Commission and other EU institutions, social partners and others. The Commission will assess on an annual basis the implementation of the Action Plan on theoccasion of the European Council meetings in springtime.

Employment: qualifications and mobility, programme of action

2002/2147(COS) - 25/01/2007 - Follow-up document

The Commission presents its final report on the implementation of its Action Plan for Skills and Mobility. The purpose of this report is to give account of progress or shortcomings on the implementation of the Action Plan for skills and mobility, which was adopted by the Commission in February 2002 and endorsed by the Barcelona European Council in March 2002. The original objectives against which progress has been measured were threefold:

1) to expand occupational mobility and skills development, by ensuring that education and training systems become more responsive to the labour market;

2) to facilitate geographic mobility through the removal of administrative and legal barriers, the development of language and cross-cultural skills, the promotion of cross-border recognition of qualifications, and an EU wide immigration policy;

3) to promote both occupational and geographic mobility through the provision and dissemination of information about existing opportunities for mobility and the related support mechanisms in the EU, mainly through the setting up of a One-Stop mobility information site and the improvement of the EURES jobs vacancy system.

An overall assessment of the Skills and Mobility Action Plan reveals that a number of significant developments have, on a whole, been initiated as regards the implementation of its 25 priority actions. This impression must be balanced, however, by the fact that many Europeans remain unaware or unconvinced of the rights, conditions and opportunities for occupational and geographical changes.

Taking stock of the above-mentioned developments and the expected developments to take place under the 2006 European Year of Workers' mobility, the Commission will prepare new initiatives in 2007. The findings of the present report point out to a number of areas for potential follow up:

Life long learning: efforts need to be stepped up in order to develop coherent and comprehensive strategies open to all in schools, businesses, public authorities and households. As required by Employment Guideline n°23 and the Community Lisbon Programme adopted in July 2005, implementation should be promoted by appropriate incentives and cost-sharing mechanisms. These measures aim to enhance the adaptability and flexibility of the European workforce in order to better respond to the changes of the European labour market and to contribute thereby to the creation of more and better jobs.

ICT skills: it is important to invest more strongly in EU core comparative and competitive advantages as well as to relate to factual information when debating the issues at stake. Following the recommendations of the European e-Skills Forum, a series of concrete actions have been initiated by the Commission at the end of 2005 to provide a more accurate picture of the supply and demand of e-skills, develop foresight scenarios (2005-2015) to better anticipate the evolution of demand, benchmark policies and initiatives in support of e-learning for enterprises, and study the possible development of a European ICT skills and career portal in co-operation with industry and the social partners.

Intensifying efforts to remove the legal, administrative and cultural obstacles to mobility: this is a more global task where efforts need to be prompted if the overall goal of creating a European labour market is to be attained. The current initiatives in the areas of social security, the portability of pension rights or the transferability of qualifications for non regulated professions need to be fully implemented and, where necessary, completed in order to create an environment where geographic and occupational mobility are considered as a normal component of a career. New areas of investigation need also to be explored : language skills, the need to provide appropriate training prior to mobility and the difficulty of finding employment for partners or spouses of mobile workers have, for example, emerged as some of the major obstacles to occupational and geographic mobility in Europe. These objectives fall in line with the new global approach put forward in the Commission's 2006 Annual Progress Report, which calls for a new partnership between the Commission and the Member States in order to meet the global challenges of more and better jobs.

Economic migration: if properly managed, should be regarded as a key asset for the economic and social development of Europe and the competitiveness of EU enterprises. In the light of the expected demographic decline and the projected fall in employment levels, managed migration represents a crucial additional instrument to meet labour market requests and sustain economic growth.

In line with the Community Lisbon Programme and the new Employment Guidelines (2005-2008), a more integrated approach to mobility seems therefore necessary in order to fully develop mobility not only as an instrument to create employment, but as a means to foster the personal development of individuals in a lifelong learning perspective.

Employment: qualifications and mobility, programme of action

2002/2147(COS) - 06/02/2004 - Follow-up document

The purpose this Commission Communication is to offer a mid-term review on the implementation of the Action Plan for Skills and Mobility. It is to be presented to the 2004 Spring European Council as a basis for further debate and consideration. The raison d'être of the Action Plan for Skills and Mobility was to create a favourable environment for open and easily accessible Labour markets. The Action Plan seeks to create a European labour market, which is open to all with access for all. Such a strategy, it is hoped, will guarantee freedom of movement for workers, contribute to the development of a well-educated, adaptable and skilled workforce and ensure adequate levels of investment in people - key to economic growth and social cohesion. The deadline for the realisation of this objective is 2005. The main purpose of this Communication is to: - Assess progress to date - Analyses the role of the European Employment Strategy and the Education and Training programme for 2010 and - Identify areas where progress has been made, where it is slow and where further action could be beneficial. The Commission Communication notes that the recent economic downturn, certainly since 2002 when the Action plan was adopted, has confounded the problem of low labour mobility. Since 2002 the overall economic decline has made it even less likely for mobility to take place. In spite of this trend the Commission recognises the importance of continuing to support the Action Plan's initial objectives. Life-long learning, human resource development and mobility between sectors remain critical to growth and economic revival. The Report analyses areas where progress has been notable. For example, the adoption of Council approved benchmarks relating to occupational mobility is viewed, by the Commission, as a positive first step. These benchmarks set standards relating to: - reducing the amount of early school leavers; - improving graduates in mathematics, science and technology; - completion of upper secondary education; - reducing the number of

15 year olds with low literacy rates and - participation in Lifelong Learning. Similarly the replacement of the E 111 card with the more recognisable "European Health Insurance Card" is deemed a welcome development in encouraging labour mobility. Important progress has also been made to simplify and modernise the co-ordination of social security schemes - vital if workers are to accept positions outside of their own national administrative structures. The launch of the European "Job Mobility Portal" which combines an enhanced EURES site on job opportunities is also considered a step in the right direction. The Report also notes that the adoption by the Commission for a new Europass is a major step towards rationalising and streamlining transparency instruments. (Europass will be a co-ordinated portfolio of documents linked to a European CV). Areas in which progress is deemed slow or even lacking concern the proposal for a Directive on the recognition of professional qualification. Finding a speedy solution to thecurrent deadlock would help boost as well as facilitate enhanced labour mobility. Failure to reach agreement on the proposed Directive on condition of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of paid employment and self-employed economic activities also leads to a low up-take on mobility. Other areas, identified as lacking in momentum and thus hindering labour mobility include the slow growth in ICT skills; the low adult uptake for further vocational training; young people's lack of skills needed for life-long learning and the need to increase, where appropriate, the transferability of social security rights (including pensions) across the European Union.

Employment: qualifications and mobility, programme of action

2002/2147(COS) - 10/10/2002 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the report by Regina BASTOS (EPP-ED, Portugal) on the Commission's Action Plan for skills and mobility. (Please refer to the document dated 11/09/02.) Parliament stressed that particular attention must be paid to early school leaving, which ranges from 8% to more than 40% across the Member States. The Commission needs to examine how the proosed network of industry/educational advisory bodies can help to tackle the high number of people leaving school without formal qualifications. Whilst Parliament is pleased with the emphasis placed on cross-cultural education as a means of preparing for mobility, Member States must still ensure that better information is provided on the possibilities offered by the programmes available. Parliament placed some emphasis on the transfer of supplementary pension rights. A solution must be found for the excessively long qualifying period, the effect of which is to reduce entitlement of pensions for mobile workers and to discriminate against women. It is also important to eliminate double taxation and eliminate or reduce tax on contributions. In view of the fact that third country migrants are being recruited in the Member States, Parliament asked the Commission to lay down migration management criteria, targets and measures to help immigrants integrate through work, and their families integrate into the local communities through the provision of high-standard public services. Finally, the mobility of workers with children, especially women, depends to a great extent on the availability of affordable childcare and good education facilities which vary between Member States. There ought to be secondary measures in those areas to achieve the aims of the Action Plan.