Basic information

2011/2067(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Agenda for new skills and jobs **Subject** 4.15 Employment policy, action to combat unemployment	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	BASTOS Regina (PPE)	16/12/2010
	Shadow rapporteur HARKIN Marian (ALDE) SCHROEDTER Elisabeth (Verts/ALE) BIZZOTTO Mara (EFD) HELMER Roger (EFD)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ITRE Industry, Research and Energy	TZAVELA Niki (EFD)	14/03/2011
REGI Regional Development	SMOLKOVÁ Monika (S&D)	22/03/2011
CULT Culture and Education	ROTH NEVEĎALOVÁ Katarína (S&D)	03/03/2011
FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality	SKRZYDLEWSKA Joanna Katarzyna (PPE)	16/02/2011

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs	3099	2011-06-17

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion	ANDOR László

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
23/11/2010	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2010)0682	Summary
12/05/2011	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
17/06/2011	Debate in Council		
26/09/2011	Vote in committee		Summary
04/10/2011	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0320/2011	
25/10/2011	Debate in Parliament		
26/10/2011	Decision by Parliament	T7-0466/2011	Summary
26/10/2011	Results of vote in Parliament		
26/10/2011	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2011/2067(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Strategic initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	EMPL/7/05786

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE462.822	20/04/2011	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE467.007	09/06/2011	
Committee opinion	CULT	PE462.815	14/07/2011	
Committee opinion	REGI	PE465.038	18/07/2011	
Committee opinion	FEMM	PE464.998	19/07/2011	
Committee opinion	ITRE	PE464.793	01/09/2011	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0320/2011	04/10/2011	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0466/2011	26/10/2011	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2010)0682	23/11/2010	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2012)28	22/02/2012	

National parliaments

Document type	Parliament /Chamber	Reference	Date	Summary
Contribution	CZ_SENATE	COM(2010)0682	21/03/2011	

Agenda for new skills and jobs

2011/2067(INI) - 23/11/2010 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: the presentation of a strategy for new skills and jobs: a European contribution towards full employment.

BACKGROUND: the European Union has agreed on an ambitious employment rate target for women and men of 75% for the 20-64 years age group by 2020. Achieving this objective will not be an easy task. The crisis has brought the employment rate down to 69%, and the unemployment rate up to 10%; assuming the labour market stabilises in 2010-2011, achieving an employment rate of 75% by 2020 will require an average employment growth slightly above 1% per annum. In addition, the EU finds itself in a situation of budgetary constraints and unprecedented global competitive pressure.

The Commission, however, considers that the EU can meet these challenges and raise employment rates substantially, **with resolute action focussing on four key priorities**:

1. **better functioning labour markets:** in this regard, flexicurity policies are the best instrument to modernise labour markets;
2. **a more skilled workforce:** this will require considerable investment in education and training systems to better match supply and demand in qualifications and skills;
3. **better job quality and working conditions** to address the demands of today's careers which are characterised by more transitions between more intense and demanding jobs and by new forms of work organisation;
4. **stronger policies to promote job creation and demand for labour**: the right conditions to create more jobs must be put in place, including in companies operating with high skills and R&D intensive business models. Selective reductions of non-wage labour costs, or well-targeted employment subsidies, can be an incentive for employers to recruit the long-term unemployed and other workers drifting from the labour market. Policies to exploit key sources of job creation and to promote entrepreneurship and self-employment are also essential to increase employment rates.

This strategy seeks to translate these priorities into key actions to be implemented.

CONTENT: **this 'Agenda for new skills and jobs' flagship initiative sets out, in 13 key actions with accompanying and preparatory measures,** the possible EU contribution to this joint effort as part of the Europe 2020 strategy. In addition to the Member States, it will concern the countries involved in the EU enlargement process and within the European Neighbourhood Policy.

The priorities of the strategy are as follows:

1) Towards a new momentum for flexicurity - reducing segmentation and supporting transitions: the four components of flexicurity (flexible and reliable contractual arrangements, comprehensive life-long learning, active labour market policies and modern social security systems) need to be strengthened to ensure that States focus on the most effective reforms. To consolidate the reform and modernisation of the labour market, the Commission proposes the following actions in partnership with the social partners.

Flexicurity – Key actions 1 to 3:

1. on the basis of the common principles of flexicurity adopted by the EU, the priorities proposed in this initiative on flexicurity could be debated in early 2011. The consensus on flexicurity should be consolidated in a Communication on a new momentum for Flexicurity in the first half of 2012;

2. the Commission will present in 2011 a Communication on the implementation of lifelong learning strategies and competence development; a European policy handbook setting out a framework for lifelong learning implementation; and a renewed action plan for adult learning;

3. to enhance the social partners' participation and ownership of the New Skills and Jobs Agenda at EU level, the Commission proposes to hold as of 2011 **a Tripartite Social Forum.**

Accompanying and preparatory measures: to complement these Key Actions, the Commission will:

• introduce, as of 2011, a comprehensive methodology to monitor Member States' progress in implementing the principles of flexicurity;

• establish, by the end of 2011, a partnership between employment services from the public, private and third sectors to encourage an EU-level strategic dialogue to make transitions pay. The partnership will also provide small-scale funding for best-practice projects; a new web tool will disseminate the evaluated and tested good practices;

• launch in 2011 a consultation of European social partners on a European framework for restructuring.

2) Equipping people with the right skills for employment: the impact of the crisis and the persistent high level of unemployment have increased the need to better understand where future skills shortages are likely to be. Irrespective of age, gender, socio-economic background, ethnicity or disability, all EU citizens should have the opportunity to acquire and develop the mix of knowledge, skills and aptitudes they need to succeed in the labour market. To this end, education and training systems must deliver the right mix of skills, including digital and transversal key competences, media literacy, and communication in a foreign language. The following actions are therefore foreseen:

Skills upgrading and matching - Key Actions 4 to 8:

4. as of 2012, produce an EU skills Panorama to improve transparency for jobseekers, workers, companies and/or public institutions. The Panorama will provide: i) up-to-date information on the top 25 growth occupations in the EU, and on the top five 'in demand' occupations per Member State; ii) an analysis of skills requirements based on the European Vacancy Monitor; iii) an analysis of skills mismatches and use of skills in the workplace; iv) foresight analysis at sector level; and v) CEDEFOPand Member States' projections. Where relevant, the Panorama will report on skills needs in particularly important areas such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics;

5. by 2012, complete in all European languages the European Skills, Competences and Occupations classification (ESCO), as a shared interface between the worlds of employment, education and training.

6. in 2012, consider the possibility of presenting proposals to help reform the systems for the recognition of professional qualifications,on the basis of the evaluation of the Professional Qualification Directive;

7. In 2011, l**aunch a New Agenda for Integration of third country nationals**;

8. In 2012, consider the possibility of presenting proposals to help improve the enforcement of rights of EU migrant workers in relation to the principle of free movement of workers.

Accompanying and preparatory measures: with the Member States, the Commission also plans to:

- by 2011, propose a **new benchmark on education for employability**, propose a Council Recommendation on **reducing early school leaving** and set up a High Level Expert Group on improving literacy among young people and adults;
- by the end of 2010, launch an awareness campaign on how citizens can benefit from EU social security coordination rules to move within Europe,without losing their rights;
- assess future skills needs in micro and craft (-type) enterprises to better mainstream the needs of these enterprises in existing EU policy initiatives;
- as of 2011, support competences for sustainable development and draw up the new Eco-Innovation Action Plan;
- as of 2011, support 'knowledge alliances', i.e. ventures bringing together business and education/ training institutions to develop new curricula; EU Industrial PhDs in the framework of Marie Curie actions and the Erasmus placement in companies will also be developed;
- in 2011, propose a Council Recommendation on the identification, recording and validation of competencesgained outside of formal education and training;
- in 2011, present an analysis of the contribution of migration policies to labour market and skills matching in line with the Stockholm programme;
- by 2012, reform the European Employment Services EURES and its legal basis, to develop its capacity and to expand it to support Your First EURES Job;
- by 2012, propose an EU-wide approach and instruments to support Member States in the integration of ICT competences and digital literacy (e-skills) into core lifelong learning policies;
- by 2012, present a Communication on the European policy for multilingualism, proposing priorities in the education and training systems, and a European language benchmark based on results of the **European Survey on Language Competence**;
- by 2012, develop in cooperation with Member States an action plan to address the gap in the supply of health workers;
- by 2012, map out and promote European **centres of excellence within new academic specialisations** for tomorrow's job. The Commission will analyse the best way to support mobility of students (European and international) towards these centres of excellence.

3) Improving the quality of work and working conditions: over the last decade, there has been good and bad news on job quality across Europe. Job satisfaction has increased overall; accidents at work, including fatal accidents, have decreased although, at least for a minority of people, work has become more intense and stressful. Improving job quality will require an integrated policy response at EU level as well as action by Member States with the following actions:

Quality of work and working conditions - Key Actions 9 to 12:

9. in 2011, review **the Working Time Directive**, and make a legislative proposal aiming at improving the implementation of the **posting of workers directive**. Wherever appropriate, the Commission will initiate action to amend, clarify or simplify existing employment-related legislation;

10. in 2011, undertake the final evaluation of the EU Strategy 2007-2012 on Health and Safety at Work, and on this basis propose in 2012 a follow-up Strategy for the period 2013-2020;

11. in 2012, review the effectiveness of EU legislation in the area of information and consultation of workers, as well as EU directives on part-time work and fixed-term contracts and their impact on female participation in employment;

12. by 2014, conduct **a comprehensive review of health and safety legislation** in partnership with Member States and the European social partners.

Accompanying and preparatory measures:

The Commission, in cooperation with Member States and social partners, will:

- in 2011, examine the feasibility of an initiative to reinforce cooperation among labour inspectorates and other enforcement bodies, with the aim of preventing and fighting undeclared work;
- in 2011, review and streamline the policy concept of quality of work, in cooperation with Member States and social partners;
- in 2012 examine the impact of employment-relevant non-discrimination directives, namely 2000/78/ECand 2000/43/EC.

4) Supporting job creation: stimulating growth may not be sufficient to create more and better jobs: the business environment needs to be job-friendly. Policies designed to promote job creation must take into account the important contribution of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Supporting job creation - Key Action 13:

13. in 2011, the Commission will propose **guiding principles to promote enabling conditions for job creation.** These will include ways to: i) address administrative and legal obstacles to hiring and firing, to creating new businesses and to self-employment; ii) reduce non-wage labour costs; iii) move from informal or undeclared work to regular employment.

Accompanying and preparatory measures:

The Commission, within the Small Business Act, will:

- by the end of 2010, launch a proposal to extend and transform the Preparatory Action Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs (EYE) into a permanent programme;
- support specific teacher-training programmes as well as the exchange of best practice to develop teachers' training in entrepreneurship,and launch a policy handbook on entrepreneurship education in order to enhance the spread, impact and quality of entrepreneurship education in Europe.

Financial instruments to underpin the strategy: in light of the current fiscal constraints on national budgets, Member States and the Commission must focus on making better use of EU funds. Cohesion policy contributes already to the development of new skills and to job creation, including in the expanding area of the green economy. More can be done to fully exploit the potential of the EU financial instruments and regulations that support reforms in the fields of employment, education and training: this means the European Social Fund (ESF) in the first place, but also the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Rural Development Fund (EARDF), the Lifelong Learning Programme and Progress. The **7**thFramework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration activities can also contribute, as well as certain Funds relating to migration policy.

Follow-up: the Commission will revise the Agenda's priorities **in 2014,** and adapt them to the new Multiannual Financial Framework. In the meantime, it will report on progress in the Annual Growth Surveys within the Europe 2020 strategy.

Agenda for new skills and jobs

2011/2067(INI) - 26/10/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs.

The resolution states that the global economic crisis has raised the unemployment rate in the European Union to a current 9.5%, which represents **22.828 million people in total**. It recalls that, within the Europe 2020 strategy, Member States agreed on an employment target of 75% for men and women in the 20-64 years age group by 2020.

Parliament underlines that the a drastic reduction of youth unemployment, increased women's participation in the labour market and effective implementation of the inclusion priority of the strategy are among the vital preconditions for reaching the employment target. However, there exist major obstacles to substantially raising employment in the EU, which can only be tackled by ensuring **better-functioning labour markets**.

Pointing out that the employment rate and economic performance are mutually reinforcing, Parliament recommends that Member States follow the Europe 2020 integrated set of guidelines for employment policies and broad economic policy guidelines. It calls for **better coordination of economic policies** among Member States in order to foster sustainable growth and job creation, taking into account the regional inequalities across Europe regarding employment and unemployment rates. Members call on the Commission to deliver on the employment and skills priority actions under the flagship initiative, giving appropriate importance to promoting both labour supply and demand in the context of a knowledge-based, sustainable and inclusive economy.

At the same time, Member States are called upon to respect the rules on budgetary discipline in order to **diminish the risk of falling into excessive deficit** . Members emphasise, however, the importance of the social impact assessment and urge an assessment of the social costs of spending cuts, in particular of those for education and active labour market policies which could jeopardise progress in addressing the shortage of skilled workers in Europe.

Fully supporting the Commission's flagship initiative as part of Europe 2020, the Parliament asks the Commission to strengthen the employment policies in the following areas:

- **education and training:** Parliament considers that qualifications and skills should be strengthened for all age groups. Reinforcing human capital and employability by means of updating skills will mean placing Europe on the path of recovery;
- **flexicurity:** the resolution stresses that national flexicurity arrangements must be reviewed in the light of the new socio-economic contexts, maintained, where appropriate, strengthened and adapted to the specific needs of each individual Member State, while strengthening poverty-proof social and unemployment protection ;
- **reorganisation of work:** measures should be taken to reconcile work and family life and make reforms to the organisation and quality of work.

Ensuring the availability of a skilled labour force: Parliament considers that it essential to substantially boost investment in education, research and innovation, and accordingly takes the view that, in order to encourage Member States to move in this direction, special consideration should be given to public spending on education, research and innovation when Member States' medium-term budget objectives are assessed.

In order to ensure the availability of a skilled work force, the resolution makes several recommendations, the main ones being as follows:

- reform the European Employment Service's EURES network ;
- boosting the attractiveness of jobs and careers to young workers with a 'knowledge alliance' that brings together businesses, social partners and education institutions to address innovation and skills gaps;
- early identification of skill needs, with at least a 10-year time horizon, and more reliable systems for the anticipation of future skill needs and skill shortages;
- raise the profile and attractiveness of professions and jobs for which there is a workforce deficit on the labour market;
- give more visibility and financial support to the Leonardo da Vinci programme, which enables people to acquire new skills, knowledge and qualifications;
- invest more in research and development;
- promote further the establishment of European Sector Councils for Employment and Skills , which should be upheld as a platform for collection and exchange of information held by Member States and regions;
- the European Social Dialogue Committees to assist in better matching existing training to present and future demand;
- involve employers in the management of education institutions and in the development of courses, teaching methods, apprenticeships, assessment and qualification;
- implement more effective policies, based on high-quality, modern education and vocational training, to prevent early school leaving;
- implement policies that offer alternatives with regard to education, training and employment for people with disabilities;
- promote European centres of excellence within new academic specialisations for tomorrow's jobs and the growth of clusters of innovative enterprises;
- integrate ICT competences, digital literacy, entrepreneurship and transversal key competences such as communication in foreign languages and competences for personal fulfilment and development;
- support language learning and the development of language teaching;
- develop training programmes for teachers ;
- set up a European quality framework for traineeships, setting up decent working conditions and rules to prevent trainees from being used to replace regular employment;
- strengthen, in the forthcoming legislative initiative on professional qualifications the mutual recognition of diplomas and professional qualifications and move towards a mechanism for enhanced mutual recognition of competences;
- develop a Seniors Action Programme for the increasing number of very experienced senior citizens who are willing to volunteer, which might run in parallel with, and complement, the Youth in Action Programme;
- maintain the craft tradition and its associated skills and to establish strategies for craft retail entrepreneurs.

Given that it is estimated that in 2015 there will be a shortfall of IT professionals extending to between 384 000 and 700 000 jobs, while the estimated deficit for the health sector is of some one million professionals and that for researchers another one million, Parliament calls for measures to ensure the necessary level of skilled human resources in these fields.

At the same time, Members strongly condemn undeclared work, which endangers both society and workers. They call on Member States to carry out regular and more numerous checks, to impose appropriate penalties, and to initiate information campaigns in order to raise awareness of the rights of workers and the long-term disadvantages for those employed in the black economy. They call for the development of a care economy to meet real needs and to ensure high quality accessible care services for all, good working and pay conditions. They also stress the potential of social, health, care and education services to create new employment.

Parliament calls on the Commission, Member States, social partners and other stakeholders to ensure efficient, simplified and synergetic use of EU funds, such as ESF, ERDF and the Cohesion Fund, and facilities such as the Microfinance Facility, for job creation, including in the social economy. It also calls on the Commission to review the existing framework of EU direct enterprise support schemes and to study the possibility of allocating the lion' s share of the support to job creation in enterprises, developing workers' skills and implementing further training programmes.

Improving the functioning of the labour market: Parliament shares the Commission's assessment that the crisis has put national flexicurity arrangements to a serious test, including where external flexibility measures have been introduced in the labour markets without corresponding

strengthening of social security systems. However, it stresses the need to pursue labour market reforms without undermining successful policies and consensus and trust between national governments and the social partners. Members also emphasise that flexicurity measures must be tailored to social circumstances and the specific structure of national labour markets and be consistent with the interests of employers and workers.

Flexicurity alone cannot remedy the crisis. It is necessary to respond to the needs of workers and companies in modern labour markets, to create decent jobs and to ensure employability of workers, adequate social protection and the respect of the principle of "equal pay for equal work" in conjunction with gender equality. Members support, pursuant to Article 155 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), dialogue between management and labour and encourage them to enter into contractual relations, including agreements; recommends that in implementing agreements concluded at European level, management and labour in each industrial sector use the procedure laid down in Article 155(2) TFEU.

The resolution urges the Member States to **develop teleworking**.

Promoting inclusive labour markets: the resolution underlines that, in order to emerge stronger from the economic crisis, to become more competitive and convergent, with higher levels of growth and employment, and to secure our welfare systems in the long term, Europe needs to make better use of its labour force potential in all age groups, to improve both functioning of its labour markets and social inclusion and social protection, as well as to boost the qualifications and skills of the labour force. Members emphasise in this context that **reducing labour market segmentation** has to be achieved by providing adequate security for workers and improving labour market inclusion.

The resolution stresses that pay rises do not keep pace with productivity gains in many Member States, and is extremely concerned at the growing number of ‘working poor’, who, although earning a wage, remain below the poverty line, and believes that resolute action should be taken to remedy this situation.

Other measures are presented such as: better and stronger policies promoting gender equality and the reconciliation of work, family and private life; efforts must be made to promote technical and engineering studies such as MINT (mathematics, informatics, natural sciences, technology) among girls and to combat gender stereotypes and professional segregation of women in education and labour market; more needs to be done to tackle discrimination, including multiple discrimination, of different groups in employment.

As regards women, Members note that opportunities to raise the rate of women’s employment are offered not only by the ‘white-job’ sector but also by the home defence sector, the logistics sector (including transport), the business services sector – insurance and consulting, for example – and the ecological sector and sustainable jobs. They urge the Commission and the Member States to support and develop specific programmes geared to recruiting women to technical professions through subsidies for young female academics.

The Commission and the Member States are called upon to encourage the private and public sector to take all possible and necessary action to **eliminate the gender pay gap** and the major inequalities in terms of access, pay, career development, participation and governance, with the aim of improving women’s participation in the labour market.

Improving job quality and working conditions: the resolution considers that pursuing the objective of full employment has to be complemented by strengthened efforts to improve the job quality, working and living conditions of all employees, including health and safety at work and gender equality. The Commission is called upon to step up efforts to review the EU definition and common indicators of job quality, to make them more operational for the evaluation and benchmarking of Member States’ policies. The key stakeholders in the field of industrial relations at EU level to work towards developing a **common European approach** in this area and to take an active part in the review of the definition and indicators of job quality.

The Commission is also called upon to:

- take measures to strengthen workplace accessibility, especially for people with disabilities;
- review health and safety legislation and to address the problem of lack of recognition of job related hazards and illnesses;
- make a greater effort to reduce the high number and increasing proportion of occupational illnesses, in particular the spread of musculo-skeletal disorders.

Lastly, the resolution considers that **workers rights, dialogue between the social partners - workers and employers - and adequate social protection** preventing in-work poverty should be at the core of employment quality and thus also of the job quality concept.