Basic information

2015/0051(NLE) NLE - Non-legislative enactments	Procedure completed
Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States in 2015 See also 2010/0115(NLE) **Subject** 4.15.02 Employment: guidelines, actions, Funds	

Key players

European Parliament	**Committee responsible**	**Rapporteur**	**Appointed**
	EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	AGEA Laura (EFDD)	02/02/2015
		Shadow rapporteur BACH Georges (PPE) RODRIGUES Maria João (S&D) KRASNODĘBSKI Zdzisław (ECR) WEBER Renate (ALDE) SYLIKIOTIS Neoklis (GUE/NGL) ŽDANOKA Tatjana (Verts/ALE)	
Council of the European Union			
European Commission	**Commission DG**	**Commissioner**	
	Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion	THYSSEN Marianne	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
02/03/2015	Legislative proposal published	COM(2015)0098	Summary
12/03/2015	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
16/06/2015	Vote in committee		
22/06/2015	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A8-0205/2015	Summary

07/07/2015	Debate in Parliament		
08/07/2015	Decision by Parliament	T8-0261/2015	Summary
08/07/2015	Results of vote in Parliament		
05/10/2015	Act adopted by Council after consultation of Parliament		
05/10/2015	End of procedure in Parliament		
15/10/2015	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2015/0051(NLE)
Procedure type	NLE - Non-legislative enactments
Procedure subtype	Consultation of Parliament
Amendments and repeals	See also 2010/0115(NLE)
Legal basis	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union TFEU 148-p2
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	EMPL/8/02938

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE552.042	25/03/2015	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE554.891	06/05/2015	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE557.049	15/06/2015	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A8-0205/2015	22/06/2015	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T8-0261/2015	08/07/2015	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Legislative proposal	COM(2015)0098	02/03/2015	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2015)554	24/09/2015	

National parliaments

Document type	Parliament /Chamber	Reference	Date	Summary
Contribution	PT_PARLIAMENT	COM(2015)0098	15/06/2015	

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES1167/2015	27/05/2015	
CofR	Committee of the Regions: opinion	CDR1419/2015	03/06/2015	

Additional information

Source	Document	Date
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act

Decision 2015/1848
OJ L 268 15.10.2015, p. 0028 Summary

Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States in 2015

2015/0051(NLE) - 02/03/2015 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to adopt the guidelines for the employment policies for **2015**.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Council may adopt the act only if Parliament has given its consent to the act.

BACKGROUND: the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union provides that Member States are to regard their economic policies and promoting employment as a matter of common concern and shall coordinate their action within the Council. In two distinct articles, it provides that the Council is to adopt broad economic policy guidelines (Article 121) and employment guidelines (Article 148), specifying that the latter must be consistent with the former.

Given this legal basis, the guidelines for employment and economic policies are presented as two distinct – but intrinsically interconnected – legal instruments:

- a Council Recommendation on broad guidelines for the economic policies of the Member States and of the Union – Part I of the Integrated Guidelines;
- a Council Decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States – Part II of the Integrated Guidelines.

The guidelines were first adopted together (‘integrated package’) in 2010, underpinning the Europe 2020 strategy. It was also decided in 2010 that the integrated guidelines should remain largely stable until 2014.

Whilst the broad economic policy guidelines remain valid for any duration of time, the employment guidelines need to be drawn up each year.

Therefore, the Commission proposes a new set of guidelines.

CONTENT: the Commission proposes new guidelines for Member States’ employment policies. These guidelines shall form part of the ‘integrated guidelines’.

The guidelines are to underpin the Europe 2020 strategy within the context of the **new approach to economic policy making built on investment, structural reform and fiscal responsibility** as set out in the Commission's 2015 Annual Growth Survey.

At the same time, the integrated guidelines are to support the achievement of **smart, sustainable and inclusive growth** and the aims of the European Semester of **economic policy coordination**.

Guidelines: the ‘Integrated Guidelines’ are the following and are set out in the annex:

- Guideline 1: Boosting investment
- Guideline 2: Enhancing growth by the implementation of structural reforms
- Guideline 3: Removing key barriers to growth and jobs at EU level
- Guideline 4: Improving the sustainability and growth-friendliness of public finances
- Guideline 5: Boosting demand for labour
- Guideline 6: Enhancing labour supply and skills
- Guideline 7: Enhancing the functioning of labour markets
- Guideline 8: Ensuring fairness, combatting poverty and promoting equal opportunities.

Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States in 2015

2015/0051(NLE) - 05/10/2015 - Final act

PURPOSE: to adopt the guidelines for the employment policies for 2015.

NON-LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Decision (EU) 2015/1848 on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States for 2015.

CONTENT: the Council adopted the guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States for 2015. These guidelines are consistent with the broad guidelines for the economic policies of the Member States and of the Union set out in Council Recommendation (EU) 2015/1184. Together, they form the integrated guidelines for implementing the Europe 2020 strategy and are to be adopted by the Council to guide the policies of Member States and of the Union.

The guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States are as follows:

Guideline 5:Boosting demand for labour

- facilitate the creation of quality jobs, reduce the barriers business faces in hiring people, promote entrepreneurship and, in particular, support the creation and growth of small enterprises;
- actively promote the social economy and foster social innovation;
- ensure that the tax burden is shifted away from labour to other sources of taxation less detrimental to employment and growth,
- together with social partners and in line with national practices, encourage wage-setting mechanisms allowing for a responsiveness of wages to productivity developments. When setting minimum wages, Member States and social partners should consider their impact on in-work poverty, job creation and competitiveness.

Guideline 6: Enhancing labour supply, skills and competences

- in cooperation with social partners, should promote productivity and employability through an appropriate supply of relevant knowledge, skills and competences by (i) making the necessary investment in all education and training systems; (ii) improving access for all to quality lifelong learning and implement active-ageing strategies that enable longer working lives; (iii) implementing active-ageing strategies that enable longer working lives;
- address structural weaknesses in education and training systems to ensure quality learning outcomes and to reduce the number of young people leaving school early;
- tackle high unemployment and inactivity through: (i) reinforcing strategies that include individualised active support for a return to the labour market; (ii) addressing youth unemployment and the high number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) through a structural improvement in the school-to-work transition, including through the full implementation of the Youth Guarantee;
- reduce barriers to employment, especially for disadvantaged groups;
- increase female participation in the labour market and ensure gender equality, notably through equal pay;
- make full use of the European Social Fund and other Union funds to foster employment, social inclusion, lifelong learning and education and to improve public administration.

Guideline 7: Enhancing the functioning of labour markets

- take into account the flexibility and security principles (‘flexicurity principles’), reduce and prevent segmentation within labour markets and fight undeclared work;
- provide a suitable environment for recruitment, while offering adequate levels of protection to all those in employment and those seeking employment;
- ensure socioeconomic security, work organisation, education and training opportunities, working conditions (including health and safety) and work-life balance;
- closely involve national parliaments and social partners in the design and implementation of relevant reforms and policies;
- strengthen active labour-market policies by increasing their effectiveness, targeting, outreach, coverage and interplay with passive measures, accompanied by rights and responsibilities for the unemployed to actively seek work;
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aim for better, more effective public employment services to reduce and shorten unemployment by providing tailored services to support jobseekers, supporting labour-market demand and implementing performance-measurement systems;
- promote the mobility of workers by lifting mobility barriers in occupational pensions and in the recognition of qualifications.

Guideline 8: Fostering social inclusion, combatting poverty and promoting equal opportunities

- modernise social protection systems to provide effective, efficient and adequate protection throughout all stages of an individual's life, fostering social inclusion, promoting equal opportunities, including for women and men, and addressing inequalities;
- provide affordable, accessible and quality services such as childcare, out-of-school care, education, training, housing, health services and long-term care;
- pay particular attention to basic services and measures aiming to prevent, reduce and protect against poverty and social exclusion through the life cycle;
- secure the sustainability and adequacy of pension systems for women and men improve the quality, accessibility, efficiency and effectiveness of health and long-term care systems.

Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States in 2015

2015/0051(NLE) - 08/07/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 520 votes to 116, with 60 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a Council decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States.

According to Eurostat estimates, there were 23 815 000 unemployed people in the Union in January 2015, 18 059 000 of whom were in the euro area.

Members recalled that Member States and the Union should work towards developing an effective and coordinated strategy for employment, designed to **counter the serious effects of unemployment**, for promoting a skilled, trained workforce and labour markets responsive to **economic, social and environmental change**.

In this respect, Parliament approved the Commission proposal subject to amendments as follows:

Guideline 5: Boosting demand for labour:

- Member States, in cooperation with regional and local authorities, should: (i) facilitate and invest in **sustainable and quality job creation**, (ii) address accessibility for at-risk groups, (iii) reduce barriers for business to hire people across skill levels and labour market sectors, including by cutting red tape, whilst respecting labour and social standards, (iv) promote **youth entrepreneurship** and in particular support the creation and growth of micro, small and medium enterprises, (v) promote, inter alia, **green**, white and blue-**sector jobs** and the social economy and foster social innovation;
- **revenue** should be protected for adequate social protection and expenditures directed towards public investment, innovation and job creation;
- the tax burden should be shifted away from labour to other sources of taxation that are less detrimental to employment. Reductions in labour taxation should be aimed **tackling discrimination** and at removing barriers to labour market participation, in particular for people with disabilities, while respecting existing labour standards;
- policies to ensure that wages allow an **adequate living income** remain important to create employment and decrease poverty in the Union;
- Member States should cut red tape in order to ease the burden on small and medium-sized enterprises, as they contribute significantly to job creation.

Guideline 6: Enhancing labour supply and skills:

- Member States should promote sustainable productivity and quality employability through an **appropriate supply of relevant knowledge and skills made available and accessible to all**. There should be particular focus on health care, social services and transport services; "soft skills" such as communication are becoming more important for a large number of occupations and should be taken into account;
- Member States should: (i) promote **entrepreneurship** among young people; (ii) step up efforts to **prevent young people from dropping out of school** and to ensure a smoother transition from education and training to professional life to **improve access and remove barriers to high-quality adult learning** for all by offering retraining of skills when job losses and changes in the labour market necessitate active reintegration; (iii) implement **active ageing strategies** to enable healthy working up to the real retirement age;
- access to **affordable, high-quality, early childhood education and care** should be a priority for comprehensive policies and investment coupled with family and parenting support and reconciliation measures helping parents to balance work and family life;
- a solution should be found to the **issue of unemployment, in particular long-term unemployment** and the problem of skills mismatch and skill obsolescence. It should be addressed by means of comprehensive and mutually reinforcing strategies, including the provision of personalised needs-based active support and appropriate social protection schemes to long-term unemployed to return to the labour market in an informed and responsible manner;
- the youth unemployment needs to be comprehensively addressed, through an **overall youth employment strategy;**
- **discrimination on the labour market as well as with regard to access to the labour market need to be further reduced**, especially for groups that face discrimination or exclusion and prevent the exclusion of those with breaks in their careers due to family responsibilities such as family carers. In this sense, the Women on Board Directive and Maternity Leave Directive should be unblocked by the Member States;
- the European Fund for Strategic Investments and its investment platforms should also be mobilised to ensure that quality jobs are created.

Guideline 7: Enhancing the functioning of labour markets:

- Member States should reduce labour market segmentation by tackling **precarious employment**, underemployment, undeclared labour and zero-hour contracts;
- adequate levels of **protection** should be offered to those in employment and those seeking employment or employed on temporary, part-time, atypical contracts or independent work contracts, by actively involving the social partners and by promoting collective bargaining;
- access to the labour market should **facilitate entrepreneurship, sustainable job creation** in all sectors, including green employment, and social care and innovation;
- Member States should ensure **basic standards of quality of active labour market policies** and introduce a **minimum income** proportionate to their specific socio-economic situation; Members insisted on the promotion of upward convergence in working conditions across the Union;
- mobility of workers should be encouraged and investment in regions experiencing **labour outflows** should be promoted to **mitigate brain drain** and encourage mobile workers to return.

Improving the quality and performance of education and training systems at all levels (new title introduced by the Parliament):

- Member States should: (i) make **access to care and to affordable quality early childhood education** a priority; (ii) set up the comprehensive policies and investment needed to: (a) improve family and parenting support; (b) reconciliation measures helping parents to balance work and family life, as a contribution to preventing early school leaving and increasing young people's chances on the labour market.

Guideline 8: Ensuring social justice, combatting poverty and promoting equal opportunities:

- Member States should improve their **social protection systems** by ensuring basic standards to ensure life in dignity, full respect of social rights, ensuring inclusion in order to eliminate poverty, in particular for people excluded from the labour market and for the more vulnerable groups; child poverty in particular must be decisively tackled;
- **the pension systems** should be structured in a way that their sustainability, safety and adequacy for women and men is ensured by strengthening retirement schemes, aiming at a decent retirement income at least above the poverty level;
- reforms of pension systems should also, inter alia, reflect labour market trends, birth rate, demographic situation, health and wealth situation, working conditions and the economic dependency ratio;
- Member States should make a full use of European Social Fund and other Union funds support in order to fight poverty, social exclusion and discrimination, improve accessibility for people with disabilities to promote equality between women and men and improve public administration.

Lastly, Parliament recalled that the realisation of the Europe 2020 strategy in the employment and social area remains a key objective of Member States' employment policy.

Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States in 2015

2015/0051(NLE) - 22/06/2015 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs adopted the report by Laura AGEA (EFDD, IT) on the proposal for a Council decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States.

Recalling that the Member States and the Union should work towards developing an effective and coordinated strategy for employment, **designed to counter the serious effects of unemployment**, the committee approved the Commission proposal subject to amendments as follows:

Guideline 5: Boosting demand for labour:

- revenue should be protected for adequate social protection and expenditures directed towards public investment, innovation and job creation;
- the tax burden should be shifted away from labour to other sources of taxation that are less detrimental to employment. Reductions in labour taxation should be aimed **tackling discrimination** and at removing barriers to labour market participation, in particular for people with disabilities, while respecting existing labour standards;
- policies to ensure that wages allow an **adequate living income** remain important to create employment and decrease poverty in the Union;
- Member States should cut red tape in order to ease the burden on small and medium-sized enterprises, as they contribute significantly to job creation.

Guideline 6: Enhancing labour supply and skills:

- Member States should promote sustainable productivity and quality employability through an **appropriate supply of relevant knowledge and skills made available and accessible to all**. There should be particular focus on health care, social services and transport services; "soft skills" such as communication are becoming more important for a large number of occupations and should be taken into account;
- Member States should: (i) promote **entrepreneurship** among young people; (ii) step up efforts to **prevent young people from dropping out of school** and to ensure a smoother transition from education and training to professional life to **improve access and remove barriers to high-quality adult learning** for all by offering retraining of skills when job losses and changes in the labour market necessitate active reintegration; (iii) implement **active ageing strategies** to enable healthy working up to the real retirement age;
- while supporting education and training alongside programmes for adult learning, Member States should take into account that low-skills jobs are also needed and that employment opportunities are better for the high-skilled than for the medium- and low-skilled;
- structural weaknesses in education and training systems should be addressed to ensure high-quality learning outcomes and prevent and tackle early school leaving, and promote an all-embracing, high-quality education from the most basic level onwards. This requires flexible educational systems with a focus on practice;
- Member States should gear their training systems more closely to the labour market with a view to better transition from training to employment;
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- **discrimination on the labour market as well as with regard to access to the labour market need to be further reduced**, especially for groups that face discrimination or exclusion and prevent the exclusion of those with breaks in their careers due to family responsibilities such as family carers. In this sense, the Women on Board Directive and Maternity Leave Directive should be unblocked by the Member States;
- the European Fund for Strategic Investments and its investment platforms should also be mobilised to ensure that quality jobs are created.

Guideline 7: Enhancing the functioning of labour markets:

- Member States should reduce labour market segmentation by tackling **precarious employment**, underemployment, undeclared labour and zero-hour contracts;
- adequate levels of **protection** should be offered to those in employment and those seeking employment or employed on temporary, part-time, atypical contracts or independent work contracts, by actively involving the social partners and by promoting collective bargaining;
- access to the labour market should **facilitate entrepreneurship, sustainable job creation** in all sectors, including green employment, and social care and innovation;
- Member States should ensure **basic standards of quality of active labour market policies** and introduce a **minimum income** proportionate to their specific socio-economic situation;
- mobility of workers should be encouraged and investment in regions experiencing **labour outflows** should be promoted to **mitigate brain drain** and encourage mobile workers to return.

Improving the quality and performance of education and training systems at all levels (new title introduced by the Members):

Member States should: (i) make **access to care and to affordable quality early childhood education** a priority; (ii) set up the comprehensive policies and investment needed to: (a) improve family and parenting support; (b) reconciliation measures helping parents to balance work and family life, as a contribution to preventing early school leaving and increasing young people's chances on the labour market.

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- **the pension systems** should be structured in a way that their sustainability, safety and adequacy for women and men is ensured by strengthening retirement schemes, aiming at a decent retirement income at least above the poverty level;
- Member States should make a full use of European Social Fund and other Union funds support in order to fight poverty, social exclusion and discrimination, improve accessibility for people with disabilities to promote equality between women and men and improve public administration.

Lastly, Members recalled that the realisation of the Europe 2020 strategy in the employment and social area remains a key objective of Member States' employment policy.