Basic information

2020/0030(NLE) NLE - Non-legislative enactments Regulation	Procedure completed
Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States **Subject** 4.15.02 Employment: guidelines, actions, Funds	

Key players

European Parliament	**Committee responsible**	**Rapporteur**	**Appointed**
	EMPL Employment and Social Affairs		
		Shadow rapporteur ZDECHOVSKÝ Tomáš (EPP) DOBREV Klára (S&D) VEDRENNE Marie-Pierre (Renew) ŽDANOKA Tatjana (Greens/EFA) SZYDŁO Beata (ECR) REIL Guido (ID)	
Council of the European Union			

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
26/02/2020	Legislative proposal published	COM(2020)0070	Summary
11/03/2020	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
23/06/2020	Vote in committee		
25/06/2020	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A9-0124/2020	
10/07/2020	Decision by Parliament	T9-0194/2020	Summary
10/07/2020	Results of vote in Parliament		
19/10/2020	Act adopted by Council after consultation of Parliament		
19/10/2020	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2020/0030(NLE)
Procedure type	NLE - Non-legislative enactments
Procedure subtype	Consultation of Parliament
Legislative instrument	Regulation
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	EMPL/9/02580

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE648.625	03/04/2020	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE650.650	07/05/2020	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE650.691	07/05/2020	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A9-0124/2020	25/06/2020	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T9-0194/2020	10/07/2020	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Legislative proposal	COM(2020)0070	26/02/2020	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2020)367	07/08/2020	

Additional information

Source	Document	Date
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act

Decision 2020/1512
OJ L 344 19.10.2020, p. 0022

Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States

2020/0030(NLE) - 26/02/2020 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to adopt guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States, in conjunction with the broad guidelines of the economic policies of the Member States and of the Union.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the Council adopts the act after consulting the European Parliament but without being obliged to follow its opinion.

BACKGROUND: the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines and the Employment Policy Guidelines were adopted jointly for the first time in 2010 to support the Europe 2020 strategy.

The Integrated Guidelines remained stable until 2014, after which revised guidelines were adopted in 2015. In 2018, they were aligned with the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights proclaimed in November 2017 by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, with the aim of stimulating a process of reform at national level and pointing the way towards renewed convergence in Europe. In 2019, they remained unchanged.

Alongside the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines, the Employment Guidelines are presented in the form of a Council Decision and serve as a basis for country-specific recommendations in the different areas concerned.

CONTENT: the Commission proposes to amend the Guidelines for the Employment Policies of the Member States in order to integrate the four dimensions of the Annual Strategy for Sustainable Growth (ASGS) and, in particular, the dimension of environmental sustainability, to reflect the vision of a strong social Europe for just transitions and to take into account the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The revised ‘Employment Guidelines’ are as follows:

Guideline 5: Boosting the demand for labour

- promote a sustainable social market economy and support investment in the creation of quality jobs (reducing barriers to employment, promoting responsible entrepreneurship and genuine self-employment, supporting the creation and growth of SMEs, including through access to finance);

- promoting the development of the social economy, stimulating social innovation and social enterprises and encouraging those innovative forms of work, which create quality employment opportunities and have positive social impacts at local level;

- ensure, in association with the social partners, that all workers have the right to adequate and fair pay through collective agreements or appropriate statutory minimum wages, taking into account their impact on competitiveness, job creation and working poverty;

- taxation should weigh less on labour and more on other sources to create more favourable conditions for employment and inclusive growth and be aligned with climate and environmental objectives.

Guideline 6: Enhancing labour supply and improving access to employment, skills and competences

- encouraging citizens to acquire knowledge, skills and competences throughout their lives, addressing structural weaknesses in education and training systems and increasing their relevance to labour market needs, also with a view to enabling environmental transition;

- equipping all learners with key competences, including basic skills, e-skills and transversal competences, in order to lay the foundations for their future adaptability;

- ensuring the transfer of training entitlements during career changes, including through individual learning accounts, and enabling individuals to anticipate and better adapt to labour market needs through continuous retraining and development to support fair and equitable transitions for all;

- promoting equal opportunities for all, including by ensuring access to quality early childhood education, raising overall educational attainment and reducing the number of early school leavers;

- increasing the number of graduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics;

- improving the provision and use of flexible forms of continuing vocational education and training and helping low-skilled adults to maintain or develop their long-term employability;

- provide timely, effective, coordinated and individualised support to unemployed and inactive persons, based on job search assistance, training and retraining, and access to other support services;

- ensuring gender equality, increasing women's participation in the labour market and

Guideline 7: Enhancing the functioning of labour markets and the effectiveness of social dialogue

- reduce and prevent segmentation within labour markets, fight undeclared work and promote the transition to permanent forms of employment;

- avoiding employment relationships that make working conditions more precarious, including in the case of platform workers and combating the abuse of atypical contracts;

- make public employment services more effective by ensuring that they provide timely and personalised assistance to job seekers, support labour market demand and introduce results-based management;

- provide unemployed people with adequate unemployment benefits for a reasonable period of time. These benefits should not discourage a rapid return to employment and should be accompanied by active labour market policies.

Guideline 8: Promoting equal opportunities for all, fostering social inclusion and fighting poverty

- ensure equal treatment as regards employment, social protection, health and long-term care, education and access to goods and services, irrespective of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation;

- develop and integrate the three strands of active inclusion: adequate income support, inclusive labour markets and access to quality support services, responding to individual needs;

- ensuring the availability of affordable, accessible and quality services and the universal provision of essential services, including for children, specifically addressing homelessness, ensuring rapid access to affordable and good quality health and long-term care;

- ensure the adequacy and sustainability of pension systems for employed and self-employed workers, ensuring equal opportunities for women and men in the acquisition of pension rights.

Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States

2020/0030(NLE) - 10/07/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 550 votes to 128, with 10 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a Council decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States.

Parliament approved the Commission proposal subject to amendments.

Consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic

Parliament stressed that the current situation caused by the COVID-19 outbreak required unprecedented action to protect businesses and workers from immediate employment and income losses, as well as to contain the economic and social shock of the crisis and avoid massive job losses and a deep recession.

Members called for the guidelines to be revised no later than one year after their adoption in order to take into account the COVID-19 pandemic and its social and employment consequences, as well as to better address similar future crises. In addition, the European Parliament should be involved in the definition of the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs on an equal footing with the Council.

Guideline 5: Boosting the demand for labour

Member States should actively promote full, quality employment on the basis of a strong economy. They should take the lead in a major public investment drive and pursue smart and ambitious employment policies.

Temporary measures to protect workers should include (i) wage subsidies, (ii) income support and the extension of unemployment benefit schemes, (iii) the extension of paid sick leave and carer's leave and teleworking arrangements.

Member States should, with the involvement of the social partners:

- support the transformation of European enterprises towards ensuring self-sufficiency, in particular in protective equipment and medical devices;

- step up their support to businesses that are struggling as a result of the crisis;

- consider suspending dismissals during the crisis period.

These measures should be sustained over time until a full economic recovery has been reached, after which they should be phased out.

Members also stressed the need to:

- guarantee the rights and jobs of mobile and frontier workers that have been hit hard by border closures;

- foster responsible entrepreneurship including among women and young people;

- promote the development of the circular and social economy, foster social innovation, social enterprises and strengthen their sustainability, and encourage those forms of work which create quality job opportunities and generate social benefits at local level, particularly in strategic sectors with strong potential for growth, such as the digital and green economy sectors.

Members argued that taxation should not be a burden on inclusive growth while being fully consistent with sustainable development objectives as set out in the European Green Deal. They also stressed the importance of policies aimed at ensuring that wages provide a decent standard of living in order to create jobs and reduce poverty in the Union.

Member States should be able to call on the assistance of the Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency solidarity instrument (SURE). They should ensure that recipient undertakings refrain from making share buy backs or paying dividends to shareholders and bonuses to executives, and that these undertakings are not registered in tax havens.

Guideline 6: Enhancing labour supply and improving access to employment, skills and competences

Member States should, inter alia:

- promote social rights, sustainability, productivity, employability and human capabilities by encouraging citizens to acquire competences throughout their lives;

- address the needs of sectors facing chronic skills shortages, in particular with a view to enabling the simultaneous environmental transition as well as technological and digital changes which go towards solutions based on artificial intelligence;

- encouraging the right to paid educational leave for professional purposes;

- take measures to strengthen distance learning and training, ensuring that it is accessible to all and taking into account the needs of people with disabilities;

- develop mechanisms and systems to support labour market transition, with the assistance of the European Social Fund;

- implement the minimum percentage as laid down in the proposed Directive on improving the gender balance on corporate boards, eliminate gender gaps in pay, pensions and employment, and move towards fully paid maternity and paternity leave.

Guideline 7: Enhancing the functioning of labour markets and the effectiveness of social dialogue

While stressing the importance of strengthening social dialogue at all levels and collective bargaining, Members stated that Member States should in particular:

- fight undeclared work and bogus self-employment and ensure that these workers genuinely enjoy fair working conditions, social rights and access to adequate social protection and improved representation;

- promote and use relevant European tools, such as the job network EURES, and increase cross-border partnerships to help mobile workers in cross-border regions;

- invest in occupational health and safety, and ensure adequate means and provisions for labour inspectorates and trade union health and safety representatives;

- address the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the labour market by supporting workers who are temporarily in “technical unemployment” because the employers were forced to close their services as well as by supporting self-employed people and small businesses to retain staff and maintain their activities.

Guidelines 8 : Promoting equal opportunities for all, fostering social inclusion and fighting poverty

Members called for more efforts to fight poverty and social exclusion, with a special focus and horizontal strategies on the working-poor, children, older persons, single parents and especially single mothers, ethnic minorities, migrants, persons with disabilities and the homeless.

Member States should also: (i) guarantee the universal access to affordable public preventive and curative health and long-term care of high and sustainable quality; (ii) protect the health of the elderly, providing them with necessary hospital treatment and healthcare and avoiding any age-based discrimination.