

Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States

2024/0599(NLE) - 07/10/2024 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs adopted, following the consultation procedure, the report by Li ANDERSSON (GUE/NGL, FI) on the proposal for a Council decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States.

The report welcomed the Commission's proposal for updated employment guidelines for the Member States, in particular its strong focus on education and training as well as new technologies, artificial intelligence and algorithmic management as well as recent policy initiatives such as platform work, affordable housing and tackling labour and skills shortages. Members reiterated, with a view to **strengthening democratic decision-making**, their call to be involved in setting the Integrated Guidelines at Union level on an equal footing with Council.

The committee approved the proposal subject to amendments.

Guideline No 5: Boosting the demand for labour

Members called on the Member States to:

- facilitate the hiring of people by businesses, significantly invest in the green transition, and foster vocational education and training, responsible entrepreneurship and genuine self-employment including among women, young people, older people and other disadvantaged groups;
- fully implement the Social Economy Action Plan and the Green Deal;
- address the impact of present and future crisis, including the intensifying impacts of climate change such as heatwaves, droughts or wildfires on the labour market.

Well-designed hiring and transition incentives, lifelong learning, VET, and upskilling and reskilling measures, developed in close cooperation with social partners, should be considered in order to support quality job creation and transitions throughout the working life, and to address labour and skill shortages.

National taxation should be supportive of job creation while ensuring that tax systems are progressive, and in line with climate and environmental objectives.

In order to avoid the offshoring of companies that have received European aid, Member stated that it is essential to review existing state aid rules and funding programmes and establish strategic solutions aimed at maintaining the industrial base within Europe.

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

Members considered that the right to paid educational leave for professional purposes should be encouraged. They recalled that decent working conditions, comprising amongst others fair wages, standard employment contracts, access to social protection, lifelong learning opportunities, occupational health and safety, a good work-life balance, reasonable working time, worker's representation, democracy at work and collective bargaining, play a crucial role in attracting and retaining skilled workers.

Member States should likewise ensure that labour migration does not result in a deterioration of existing working conditions for domestic workers. The adoption of an EU Talent Pool, combined with an ambitious transposition of the EU Blue Card Directive, could offer opportunities to tackle labour shortages across skill levels and sectors.

The various guidelines developed within the framework of the employment package of the European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2023-2030 should be fully implemented in workplaces.

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

Members insisted on ensuring the protection of labour rights, a high level of social protection and secure employment, inclusive recruitment, health and safety at work, as well as well-adapted working environments for all workers. At the same time, Member States should ensure a suitable environment for companies and employers to adapt to changes. Member States should fully implement EU occupational health and safety regulations, including binding occupational exposure limit values, in order to work towards reducing the number of fatal accidents at work and eliminating workplace cancer.

Moreover, at the same time, it also risks diluting boundaries between working time and private life, therefore highlighting a need for a directive on the right to disconnect.

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

Homelessness should be tackled specifically by promoting access to permanent housing (housing first approach) and the provision of enabling support services.

Members considered that pension reforms should be supported by policies that aim to reduce the gender pension gap, including by adequately valued periods of maternity and parental leave, and to promote active and healthy ageing and decent working conditions to ensure that workers can actually remain in employment until they reach the statutory retirement age. At the same time workers who wish to remain active after they have reached the retirement age should have the possibility to do so.