Procedure file

Basic information

INI - Own-initiative procedure	2003/2105(INI)	Procedure completed
Employment: candidate countries' policy, joint assessment papers Subject 4.15 Employment policy, action to combat unemployment 8.20.20 Enlargement's employment and social point of view		

Key players

European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	PSE ETTL Harald	12/03/2003
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	AFET Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security, Defense	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion		

Key events

30/01/2003	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2003)0037	Summary
05/06/2003	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
09/07/2003	Vote in committee		Summary
09/07/2003	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0282/2003	
23/09/2003	Decision by Parliament	T5-0396/2003	Summary
23/09/2003	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2003/2105(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed

Committee dossier	EMPL/5/19623

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		COM(2003)0037	30/01/2003	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(2003)0200	18/02/2003	EC	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0282/2003	09/07/2003	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0396/2003 OJ C 077 26.03.2004, p. 0021-0059 E	23/09/2003	EP	Summary
Follow-up document		COM(2003)0663	06/11/2003	EC	

Employment: candidate countries' policy, joint assessment papers

PURPOSE : to review progress on the implementation of the Joint Assessment Papers on employment policies in candidate countries. CONTENT : in 1999 the Commission initiated a cooperation process on employment with the candidate countries. It was agreed that in a first step candidate countries and the Commission would analyse the key challenges for employment policies in "Joint Assessments Papers" (JAPs). This Communication summarises the challenges identified in the JAPs and reviews the progress in follow up. Thereby it points to the employment policy challenges resulting from applying the Lisbon objectives and from preparing the implementation of the Employment Title. Labour market strategic challenges: To date economic restructuring has had a heavy impact on the labour markets in the candidate countries in particular those in Central and Eastern Europe. With participation and employment still adjusting, unemployment has risen. A significant increase in employment in services has been achieved, but it has not yet been sufficient to compensate for the job losses in agriculture and industry, which remain the main employers in most counters. Against the background of rapid restructuring the JAPs identify a number of crucial strategic challenges for the labour market: - increase employment rates, which are generally below that of the EU with high unemployment in Bulgaria, Slovakia, Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The low employment rates in the candidate countries are mainly accounted for by low male employment rates. At the moment none of the CCs meets the two Lisbon employment targets, with Cyprus at 67.9% being the closest and Poland at 53.8% the most distant from the overall 70% target. - increase labour supply. In most candidate countries, a feature of the transition process was substantial withdrawals from the labour market. Most candidate countries need to reverse the trend of labour force participation and bring back major parts of the working-age population into the labour market as a precondition for economic and social development. - labour market functioning should support the restructuring of the economy. Rapid restructuring is driving economic growth, at least in the Central and Eastern European candidate countries and structural adjustment is likely to continue after membership. The importance of agriculture for the economies of some candidate countries remains significantly greater than in the EU but the high share of agricultural workers is not reflected in a proportionately high share of gross valued-added, and productivity levels are much below the EU average. This is of particular concern in Romania, Bulgaria and Poland. - increase labour force skill levels in the context of restructuring and future pressures linked to the Single Market. The employment rate of the high-skilled is markedly higher than that for the low-skilled - even if compared to the already high EU differentials. The expected shifts in the sectoral employment structures in these countries suggest that the demand for a more qualified labour supply will increase further. Against this background, the review carried out in the JAPs has identified certain common policy issues. These centre on: - ensuring that wage developments and wage formation system areemployment-friendly, and - that tax and benefits systems are supportive to employment; - investing in human resources and addressing skills gaps; - enabling the Public Employment services to play an effective role; - promoting a more pro-active and preventive policy approach; - ensuring social cohesion and integration ethnic minorities; - modernising the labour market, by developing new framework for security and flexibility; - promoting equal opportunities; - strengthening capacity building to design appropriate policies and policy mix and ensuring implementation; - ensure availability of resources for employment policies including human capital investment and social infrastructure. The paper goes on to outline the next steps and the areas where cooperation will be pursued before membership.?

Employment: candidate countries' policy, joint assessment papers

The committee adopted the own-initiative report drawn up by Harald ETTL (PES, A) in response to the Commission paper on the implementation of the Joint Assessment Papers on employment policies in candidate countries. MEPs noted that special efforts were needed to enable the candidate countries to achieve a stable employment policy and called on the Commission to make it easier for them to have access to funding from the various support programmes, for example, by eliminating red tape. The report also called for an additional aid instrument to prevent regions from becoming impoverished as a result of industrial restructuring. The candidate countries, for their part, were urged to draw up employment strategies for particular crisis regions in order to avert further emigration and impoverishment. The committee also wanted those countries to involve the social partners and NGOs in economic and social policy-making processes and to make further efforts to prevent and combat illegal employment. The report stressed that a broad and adaptable training and education strategy was crucial for the development of industrial and commercial mixed-economy structures. It urged private investors from the EU to earmark part of their investment for training and further training of their employees. Moreover, the Commission was asked to consider further measures for promoting cross-border mobility in the area of education. MEPs said that farms should be assessed not only from the viewpoint of business economics but also in terms of their importance for environmental protection and landscape conservation and "the relief which they will continue to afford in the social field until such time as enough alternative jobs come into existence outside farming". Other points dealt with in the report included the need to ensure equal treatment of and to combat discrimination against the disabled and minorities. The committee also wanted to see employment measures and practices based on equal status for both sexes and called for practical measures to improve women's access to education, training and employment, improve the position of women and men on the labour market and make it possible to combine family and working life.?

Employment: candidate countries' policy, joint assessment papers

The European Parliament adopted the own-initiative report drawn up by Harald ETTL (PES, Austria) on employment policies in candidate countries. (Please see the document dated 09/07/03.) Parliament made the following points: -those countries in which youth unemployment stands at 20% or more must make special efforts at least to reduce it to the average level of unemployment in the EU in order to prevent neglect and radicalisation; -there should be introduced a selective business location policy in the candidate countries in order to avert the tendency towards impoverishment of the population due to job losses and the associated loss of training and further training establishments; -only a mobility policy based on proper training will make it possible to prevent the creation in an enlarged Europe of regions of emigration, which workers will be forced to leave because there is too little employment; -privatisation must not be allowed to result in the destruction of services of general economic interest; Finally, Parliament stressed the fact that the candidate countries must enable the Roma minority to become increasingly involved in planning, implementing and assessing projects and specific measures to foster their integration.?