Procedure file

Basic information

INI - Own-initiative procedure	2014/2238(INI)	Procedure completed
Green employment initiative: tapping into the job creation potential of the green economy Subject 3.40.16 Raw materials 3.70.20 Sustainable development 4.15.02 Employment: guidelines, actions, Funds		

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs		09/12/2014
	LAMBERT Jean	
	Shadow rapporteur	
	CLUNE Deirdre	
	KELLER Jan	
	TREBESIUS Ulrike	
	TØRNÆS Ulla	
	AGEA Laura	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
DEVE Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
INTA International Trade	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety		28/01/2015
	EVI Eleonora	
ITRE Industry, Research and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
FEMM Women?s Rights and Gender Equality		02/12/2014
	VANA Monika	

European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner
	Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion	THYSSEN Marianne

Key events

02/07/2014	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2014)0446	Summary
15/01/2015	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
16/06/2015	Vote in committee		
22/06/2015	Committee report tabled for plenary	A8-0204/2015	Summary
07/07/2015	Debate in Parliament		
08/07/2015	Results of vote in Parliament		
08/07/2015	Decision by Parliament	T8-0264/2015	Summary
08/07/2015	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2014/2238(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	EMPL/8/01436

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		COM(2014)0446	02/07/2014	EC	Summary
Committee draft report		PE551.783	05/03/2015	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE554.848	17/04/2015	EP	
Committee opinion	FEMM	PE549.120	08/05/2015	EP	
Committee opinion	ENVI	PE549.254	18/05/2015	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A8-0204/2015	22/06/2015	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T8-0264/2015	08/07/2015	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2015)575	01/12/2015	EC	

Green employment initiative: tapping into the job creation potential of the green economy

PURPOSE: to propose a Green Employment Initiative regarding tapping into the job creation potential of the green economy.

BACKGROUND: the inefficient use of resources, the unsustainable pressure on the environment, and climate change, as well as social exclusion and inequalities pose challenges to long-term economic growth.

A model for green growth leading to a low carbon, climate resilient and resource efficient economy - is used to depict a structural economic change that proposes a different model from the takes-makes-consumes and disposes model (linear model) to one where saving, re-using and recycling materials will get more value added and more benefit from each ton of material, each joule of energy and each hectare of land (circular economy).

Against this picture, the Commission proposes a Green Employment Initiative, which was set out in the 2012 Commission Employment Package (Employment Guideline 7).

Up to now, integrated policy frameworks linking green growth and employment existed in only a small number of Member States, with the majority having a disjointed and fragmented approach.

It is now necessary to put forward solutions and tools aiming, on the one hand, at supporting employment and job creation in the green economy and on the other, contributing to attaining the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy.

CONTENT: it is estimated that employment in the EU increased from 3 to 4.2 million between 2002 and 2011, including during the period of global financial crisis. For the wider economy, by increasing the efficiency of production processes, adopting innovative solutions to save resources, developing new business models, or offering more sustainable products and services, companies can expand their markets and create new jobs, while transforming existing ones. If this rate were maintained, it could boost GDP by nearly 1%, while creating more than 2 million jobs.

Accordingly, the Commission suggests that a strategy enabling transition towards a green economy should focus on the following:

- bridging the skills gaps;
- anticipating change, securing transitions and promoting mobility;
- supporting job creation;
- increasing data quality.

The Communication sets out the broad outlines of the actions:

Bridging the skills gaps: this means fostering skills developments and better forecasting skills needs across sectors and industries to allow the relevant authorities and stakeholders to adapt to change. Eco-innovation sectors are targeted, with fostering of skills in science, technology and mathematics skills (STEM) as part of compulsory and tertiary education. Classification systems such as 'European classification of Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations' (ESCO) can be used to identify skills gaps. The EU Skills Panorama, launched by the Commission in 2012, provides an overview of European, national and sectoral findings on the short to medium-term prospects for jobs and skills needs.

Anticipating change, securing transitions and promoting mobility: transformation processes, in particular from declining to emerging activities, require timely anticipation and management. Restructuring should be handled in a socially responsible way, in particular to preserve human capital through continuous up-skilling programmes for workers on the job and bearing in mind emerging risk linked to the development of green technologies. At the same time, action needs to be taken to ensure adaptation of labour market institutions in order to ease and secure transitions. Public employment services (PES) provide valuable information about skills requirements and could be used. Lastly, the paper suggests developing incentives to promote geographical and occupational mobility through EURES or ESCO to match jobs to skills at Union level.

Supporting job creation: EU funding should be used to support the green transition through the ESF, ERDF, EAFRD, COSME, Horizon 2020, LIFE and FI-TAP. Furthermore, to move towards a green economy, it is important to consider shifting taxes from labour to environmental taxation that would remove harmful subsidies and can result in both higher employment and lower emissions and pollution. Public procurement can be used to promote growth in the green economy and green social enterprises could inspire others to be entrepreneurs.

Increasing data quality: the regular collection of harmonised statistics would facilitate more evidence-based policy making and monitoring, as well as better anticipation of transitional effects on the labour market and identification of skills needs.

The Communication also stresses the need to promote social dialogue and international cooperation with stakeholders such as the Global Green Growth Institute, OECD, UNEP and World Bank.

Lastly, the Communication emphasises that the following priorities should be pursued in the transition to the green and resource efficient economy that support job creation and skills and education:

- improving integration and coordination of existing European and national level policies and initiatives;
- further developing governance structures and methodological tools to facilitate the transition towards a green and resource efficient economy, and establishing a closer working relationship and dialogue with social partners on the employment challenges for greening the economy;
- further strengthening the existing Commission skills intelligence tools and networks to better anticipate and monitor developments in sectors and occupations linked to green growth;
- working towards an international playing field in promoting green and inclusive growth.

Green employment initiative: tapping into the job creation potential of the green economy

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs adopted an own-initiative report by Jean LAMBERT (Greens/EFA, UK) on the Green Employment Initiative: Tapping into the job creation potential of the green economy.

The report emphasised that a transition towards sustainable societies and economies can generate the potential both to create new quality jobs and to transform existing employment into green jobs in virtually all sectors and across the entire value chain. It also noted that the transition bears significant potential to create local jobs which cannot be relocated, and in sectors hit by the crisis such as the buildings sector.

Members highlighted the fact that full implementation of environmental legislation, as well as the improvement of environmental integration and policy coherence across different sectorial polices in the EU, are essential for a full deployment of the potential linked to the green economy

and therefore for the creation of green jobs.

Towards a green economy: the report urged the Member States, and the Commission to commit to a just transition roadmap to pursue ambitious environmental goals with the promotion of the following aspects: (i) adequate social protection and remuneration, (ii) long-term jobs and healthy and safe working conditions, (iii) government-led investment in education, (iv) respect for labour rights and the strengthening of worker information, consultation and participation rights regarding matters concerning sustainable development, and effective workforce representation.

Members stressed the need to:

- provide the existing workforce with proper opportunities to acquire the new skills needed for the circular economy;
- anticipate change in employment requiring proactive transformation management and improved high-quality data collection on the current and future needs of the labour market, with the involvement of European higher-education institutions.

Local authorities can play a key role in promoting job growth in the green economy and more decent and inclusive jobs by green investment and supporting both green SMEs and greening of SMEs.

Skills for green employment: Members called for an ambitious strategy for creating sustainable jobs, including by addressing the skills mismatch with a particular focus on meeting the skills needs of a greener economy. In this regard, they called for:

- the setting up of a data bank listing training courses and job offers related to green employment, with the aim of improving the quality of information, advice and guidance available on careers;
- better synergies between education systems and emerging new green jobs through better coordination between educational institutions and employers' unions and other relevant organisations;
- the adoption by the Member States, regional governments and local authorities, together with the social partners and training providers, skill development and anticipation strategies with the objective of improving generic, sectoral and occupation-specific skills;
- the integration of sustainable development and environmental competences and skills into training and education systems.

The Commission is asked to: (i) open a public debate on, and to promote the concept of, education for sustainable development, with special emphasis on the education of girls and women; (ii) start applying a new, social and climate-friendly indicator on growth that includes non-economic aspects of wellbeing and sets its primary focus on issues related to sustainable development, such as gender equality, poverty reduction and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Policy coherence: the report called on the Commission and the Member States to adopt ambitious, long-term and integrated regulatory, fiscal and financial frameworks for sustainable investment and to encourage innovation. Policies should be developed in a framework of long-term horizons that includes targets as well as indicators to measure progress towards their achievement.

The European Union and the Member States should:

- set mandatory energy-saving and efficiency targets, and to support white certificates as an instrument to facilitate the achievement of EU energy-saving targets;
- consider examining whether the introduction of environmental and social criteria in public procurement policies could boost job creation in the greener economy;
- support the contribution of public services to the just transition towards a sustainable economy;
- phase out direct and indirect environmentally harmful subsidies including, but not limited to, those for fossil fuels;
- introduce targeted subsidies and/or tax exemptions for start-ups that provide goods and services offering high environmental added value;
- step up international efforts to create a global environmental policy that can limit the damage caused by offshoring of industrial production outside the EU and by carbon leakage.

For its part, the Commission should:

- help revive the repairs sector;
- issue country-specific recommendations to the Member States that can contribute to efforts to foster green employment and reduce ecological footprints;
- use the EU Semester and the review of the Europe 2020 strategy to support green job creation
- propose more ambitious social and environmental targets for 2030 and 2050;
- present its proposal to reform the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) as soon as possible.

Support to SMEs: the report called on the Commission and the Member States to promote, including in the framework of the European Fund for Strategic Investments, quality investments geared towards generating societal and economic benefits such as sustainable quality jobs, gender equality, quality education and innovation to promote the green transition and to fight energy poverty. Investments should be focused in areas with positive labour market impact.

Lastly, recalling that SMEs have enormous potential for creating employment, in particular youth employment, the report recognised that the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) could help micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises to engage in activities involving a high degree of environmental and social innovation.

Green employment initiative: tapping into the job creation potential of the green economy

The European Parliament adopted by 542 votes to 99, with 20 abstentions, a resolution on the Green Employment Initiative: Tapping into the job creation potential of the green economy.

Towards a green economy opportunities for the labour market: Parliament emphasised that a transition towards sustainable societies and economies can generate the potential both to create new quality jobs and to transform existing employment into green jobs in virtually all sectors and across the entire value chain. It also noted that the transition bears significant potential to create local jobs which cannot be relocated, and in sectors hit by the crisis such as the buildings sector.

In this regard, Members highlighted the fact that full implementation of environmental legislation, as well as the improvement of environmental integration and policy coherence across different sectorial polices in the EU, are essential for a full deployment of the potential linked to the green economy and therefore for the creation of green jobs.

Just transition and creation of quality and sustainable jobs: Parliament urged the Member States, and the Commission to commit to a just transition roadmap to pursue ambitious environmental goals with the promotion of the following aspects: (i) adequate social protection and remuneration, (ii) long-term jobs and healthy and safe working conditions, (iii) government-led investment in education, (iv) respect for labour rights and the strengthening of worker information, consultation and participation rights regarding matters concerning sustainable development, and effective workforce representation.

Members highlighted the importance of national governments in promoting sectorial social dialogue, especially in newly emerging green industries. They stressed the need to:

- provide the existing workforce with proper opportunities to acquire the new skills needed for the circular economy;
- anticipate change in employment requiring proactive transformation management and improved high-quality data collection on the current and future needs of the labour market, with the involvement of European higher-education institutions.

Local authorities can play a key role in promoting job growth in the green economy and more decent and inclusive jobs by green investment and supporting both green SMEs and greening of SMEs.

Skills for green employment: Parliament called for an ambitious strategy for creating sustainable jobs, including by addressing the skills mismatch with a particular focus on meeting the skills needs of a greener economy. It recalled that skills development should encourage the development of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills, which are widely useful in an economy.

Whilst welcoming the tools for skills development and the forecasting of skill needs proposed by the Commission, the resolution called for:

- the setting up of a data bank listing training courses and job offers related to green employment, with the aim of improving the quality of information, advice and guidance available on careers;
- better synergies between education systems and emerging new green jobs through better coordination between educational institutions and employers' unions and other relevant organisations;
- the adoption by the Member States, regional governments and local authorities, together with the social partners and training providers, skill development and anticipation strategies with the objective of improving generic, sectoral and occupation-specific skills;
- the integration of sustainable development and environmental competences and skills into training and education systems;
- put in place mechanisms to train staff in employment authorities and services to mainstream skills for green employment in labour market policies.

The Commission is asked to open a public debate on, and to promote the concept of, education for sustainable development, with special emphasis on the education of girls and women.

Policy coherence: Parliament called on the Commission and the Member States to adopt ambitious, long-term and integrated regulatory, fiscal and financial frameworks for sustainable investment and to encourage innovation. Policies should be developed in a framework of long-term horizons that includes targets as well as indicators to measure progress towards their achievement.

The European Union and the Member States should:

- set mandatory energy-saving and efficiency targets, and to support white certificates as an instrument to facilitate the achievement of EU energy-saving targets;
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For its part, the Commission should:

- help revive the repairs sector;
- issue country-specific recommendations to the Member States that can contribute to efforts to foster green employment and reduce ecological footprints;
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- propose more ambitious social and environmental targets for 2030 and 2050;
- present its proposal to reform the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) as soon as possible.

Investing in sustainable job creation: Parliament called on the Commission and the Member States to promote, including in the framework of the European Fund for Strategic Investments, quality investments geared towards generating societal and economic benefits. Investments should be focused in areas with positive labour market impact.

Member States are called upon to make full use of the possibilities under the legal framework for the European Structural and Investment Funds to promote sustainable projects that foster green employment.

Parliament recommended that quality investment in key public services such as communications, energy, transport, waste and water management are targeted in order to support sustainable public-procurement procedures and the mainstreaming of green skills.

Support to SMEs: recalling that SMEs have enormous potential for creating employment, in particular youth employment, Parliament supported the objectives of the Green Action Plan for SMEs and recognised that the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) could help micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises to engage in activities involving a high degree of environmental and social innovation.

The Commission is called upon to stimulate new business models, such as cooperative enterprises, for increasing the efficiency of production and distribution processes, adopting innovative solutions to save resources and offering more sustainable products and services.