

European network of employment services (EURES), workers' access to mobility services and further integration of labour markets

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The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs adopted the report by Heinz K. BECKER (EPP, AT) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a European network of Employment Services, workers' access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets.

The committee recommended that the position of the European Parliament in first reading following the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the Commission proposal as follows:

Purpose: Members specified that the aim of the Regulation was not only to facilitate the exercise of the freedom of movement for workers within the Union but also abolish any discrimination based on nationality between workers of Member States as regards employment, remuneration and other conditions of work and employment within the Union.

Actions taken by Member States must aim to achieve a high level of quality and sustainable employment and ensure the functioning of a European network of employment services (EURES), with the appropriate involvement of the social partners.

The Regulation also provided rules regarding:

- services provided to job seekers in order to ensure fair mobility;
- effective promotion of the EURES network at Union level by means of intensive communication measures taken by the Commission and, in particular, the Member States.

Reorganisation and strengthening of EURES: apart from the European Coordination Office, through which the Commission was responsible for assisting the EURES network, and the National Coordination Offices, the EURES network must include public employment services (PES) designated by each Member State and the public or private organisations authorised by Member States to provide support services to workers and employers at national, regional or local level, or a cross-border basis.

Objectives: the EURES network should contribute to the achievement of the following objectives, inter alia:

- the implementation of the coordinated strategy for employment and particularly for promoting a skilled, trained and adaptable workforce;
- ensuring the functioning, cohesion and integration of the labour markets in the Union, including cross-border labour markets, ensuring non-discriminatory access to job opportunities and applications and relevant labour market information;
- increasing voluntary geographical and occupational mobility in the Union, particularly in cross-border regions, on a fair basis;
- ensuring Union-wide social inclusion of persons excluded from the labour market, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable groups and people in regions most affected by unemployment;
- ensuring greater coherence between Union policies introduced for the purpose of tackling unemployment, in particular youth unemployment and inequalities;
- supporting a smooth transition from education to work in the Union labour market.

The EURES portal and related IT services must be made useable and accessible to all reaching all possible users, including providing a barrier-free environment;

The European Coordination Office should provide the widest possible access of EURES services on a non-discriminatory basis. It must draw on past experience and adapt this to specific local and regional characteristics, and issue an annual statement reporting the number of job vacancies made available in each Member State, taking into account the population and the size of their economy.

Each National Coordination Office should be responsible for taking all necessary measures in order to ensure that all job applications and CVs available nationally were made available to the EURES portal. It should ensure that there were sufficient numbers of trained EURES advisers available and spread evenly over the whole territory in order to promote the EURES network and ultimately make it an indispensable tool for the Union labour market.

In relation to the provision of tailor-made information to workers and employers by the EURES advisers, the National Coordination Office shall disseminate in the official language(s) of the Member State, up-to-date information on:

- living and working conditions, including social security contributions and tax payments;
- administrative procedures regarding access to and take-up of employment
- the rules applicable to workers, such as those laid down in collective agreements, recruitment rules, individual categories of employment contracts and other relevant practical information;
- the rules applicable to apprenticeships and traineeships in line with the Council Recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeship;
- the access to vocational education and training;

Access to basic information: Members considered that all jobseekers should be entitled to comprehensive information concerning conditions of employment, such as pension rights, welfare insurance and health insurance, in the country and place in which the job was located. EURES partners and members should provide information on terms of employment in the Member State and at the place of work, such as pension entitlements, social security, taxation or health insurance.

Member States should ensure coordination between support services under the Regulation and services provided on health, social security, unemployment insurance and taxation by the competent authorities at national, regional and local level and through cross-border

cooperation structures. Members also recommended further personalised services provided by the EURES advisors.

EURES cross-border partnerships: Members proposed that EURES cross-border partnerships and other specific support structures might be set up in cross-border regions in order to facilitate cross-border labour mobility. The border partnerships should provide specific, multi-lingual information on particular types of employment. That information should contain, inter alia, information on minimum standards in labour law, employment and health protection and minimum wages.

Exchange of information between Member States: the committee suggested that Member States collect and analyse information on the needs and tendencies of the labour market in order to create possible synergies between employers and universities or professional training institutes to address the problem of mismatch between skills and vacancies.

Ex post evaluation: the Commission should submit ex-post evaluation on the operation and effects of the Regulation two years (rather than five years) after entry into force of the Regulation.