



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 14 May 2009

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**SOC 330
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REPORT

from : Social Questions Working Party
to : Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 1) / Council

No prev. doc.: 7436/09 SOC 180 ECOFIN 187 EDUC 49
No. Cion prop. : 5881/09 SOC 49 ECOFIN 66 EDUC 14

Subject : **Proposal for a Council Decision on the Guidelines for the Employment Policies of the Member States**
- Political agreement

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2008, it was decided that the Integrated Guidelines 2008-2010, a package including both the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines and the Employment Guidelines, should be valid for three years, and in the intermediate years their updating should remain strictly limited. On 28 January 2009, the Commission submitted on the basis of Article 128(2) of the Treaty a proposal for a Decision of the Council on Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States, proposing that the Employment Guidelines be maintained unchanged for 2009.

The Employment Committee formulated its Opinion (doc. 6456/09) during its meeting of 16/17 February 2009.

The Council (EPSCO) at its session on 9 March 2009, reached a general approach on the proposal on the understanding that it would be reconsidered once all the opinions required by Article 128(2) of the Treaty had been received.

Meanwhile, the European Council confirmed at its meeting on 13/14 March that, in the current crisis, the renewed Lisbon Strategy, including the Integrated Guidelines 2008-2010, remained the effective framework for fostering sustainable growth and jobs.

The European Parliament adopted its opinion on 11 March 2009, endorsing the Commission's proposal to maintain the current Employment Guidelines for 2009. The Economic and Social Committee adopted an opinion during its plenary of 13/14 May 2009, endorsing also the Commission's proposal and stressing, among other things, the need for the social partners and civil society to be involved in drawing up and implementing the Employment Guidelines. The Committee of the Regions, while informing the Council that it would not adopt a specific opinion, drew the Council's attention to its opinion on the Lisbon and Growth Strategy, adopted on 26 November 2008, which covered issues similar to those of the Employment Guidelines (letter dated 12 March 2009).

The text of the draft Decision, following the Social Questions Working Party's examination of 13 May 2009 is to be found in the Annex.

II. CONCLUSION

Given the above, the Permanent Representatives Committee could therefore forward the draft Decision to the Council (EPSCO), with a view to its adoption as an "A" item at a subsequent Council, after its legal and linguistic finalisation.

Draft

COUNCIL DECISION

on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 128(2) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission¹,

Having regard to the Opinion of the European Parliament²,

Having regard to the Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee³,

After consulting the Committee of the Regions,

Having regard to the Opinion of the Employment Committee,

Whereas:

¹ OJ C ..., ..., p.

² OJ C ..., ..., p.

³ OJ C ..., ..., p.

- (1) The renewed Lisbon Strategy in 2005 has placed the emphasis on growth and jobs. The Employment Guidelines of the European Employment Strategy and the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines have been adopted as an integrated package, whereby the European Employment Strategy has the leading role in the implementation of the employment and labour market objectives of the Lisbon Strategy.
- (2) The examination of the Member States' National Reform Programmes contained in the Joint Employment Report shows that Member States should continue to make every effort to address the priority areas of: attracting and retaining more people in employment; increasing labour supply and modernising social protection systems; improving adaptability of workers and enterprises; and increasing investment in human capital through better education and skills.
- (3) In view of the current economic crisis, the Guidelines should also serve as a tool for meeting the immediate challenges of increasing unemployment and social exclusion. Policies in the immediate term include integrated flexicurity policies to facilitate transitions to work, matching the unemployed with available jobs, and skills upgrading.
- (4) In light of the Commission's examination of the National Reform Programmes, the focus should be on effective and timely implementation, paying special attention to the agreed targets and benchmarks and the involvement of social partners.
- (5) The Employment Guidelines adopted in 2008 were valid for three years during which their updating should remain strictly limited.
- (6) Member States should explore the use of the European Social Fund when implementing the Employment Guidelines.

- (7) In view of the integrated nature of the guideline package, Member States should fully implement the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines.

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The guidelines for Member States' employment policies as set out in the Annex to Council Decision of 15 July 2008 on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States⁴ are maintained for 2009 and shall be taken into account by the Member States in their employment policies.

Article 2

This Decision is addressed to the Member States.

Done at,

*For the Council
The President*

⁴ Council Decision 2008/618/EC of 15 July 2008 on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States OJ L 198, 26.7.2008, p. 47–54