



The Employment Committee

OPINION OF THE EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE ON THE COMMISSION COMMUNICATION ON STRUCTURAL INDICATORS

The Employment Committee has considered the Commission Communication on structural indicators and its comments are set out below.

General comments

The Committee emphasises that the structural indicators should continue to contribute to an integrated view of progress made towards the objectives of the Lisbon strategy. The Committee considers that the proposed shortlist of structural indicators, of which seven are employment and social cohesion related, covers important Lisbon targets. However, there are other important Lisbon targets which are not presented in the proposed shortlist. Therefore, the Committee stresses that:

- the Commission should make use of the wider list of structural indicators in the database for its analysis in the Spring Report in order to make a comprehensive analysis of Member States' progress; and
- the Council, and the relevant Committees, must have the opportunity to give their opinions on any changes proposed to the wider list of structural indicators in the database.

Disaggregation by gender is an important principle for the indicators and should be applied as far as possible. The Committee emphasises that the gender breakdowns in the shortlist of structural indicators should be presented in the Spring Report.

The Committee reiterates the need to ensure the best possible consistency between the indicators used in the annual Spring Report and those used in the relevant policy processes, in particular in the Employment Strategy. In this context, the Committee's list of employment indicators, which has just been reviewed in the light of the new Employment Guidelines, should be taken into account.

The Committee supports the idea that the full database, built on the wider list of structural indicators, should be publicly accessible.

Employment and social cohesion related indicators

The Committee generally welcomes the choice of employment-related indicators in the proposed shortlist, including the indicators on long-term unemployment rate, at risk of poverty rate and dispersion of regional employment rates. The Committee stresses the importance of including other key elements of the Employment Strategy, such as the unemployment rate, the participation in education and training (25-64) and the gender pay gap, if the shortlist is to be extended.

While recognising the Lisbon European Council's call for a substantial annual increase in per capita investment in human resources, the Committee notes that the indicator on spending in human resources, for the time being, only includes information on public expenditure on education. Therefore, the Committee proposes to keep this indicator in the wider list of structural indicators and to replace it in the shortlist with an indicator on educational attainment, used as a key indicator in the Employment Strategy, in order to have an output oriented indicator.

Subject to the amendment at point 5, the Committee endorses the shortlist proposed by the Commission. The amended list of employment and social cohesion indicators is set out below:

Table 1: EMCO's recommended list of employment and social cohesion related indicators for use in the 2004 Spring Report	
Indicators	Country coverage
2. Labour productivity	Full coverage
3. Employment rate*	Full coverage
4. Employment rate of older workers*	Full coverage
5. Educational attainment (20-24)*	Full coverage
9. At risk of poverty rate*	Full coverage
10. Long-term unemployment*	Full coverage
11. Dispersion of regional employment rates*	12 MS + 6 ACC

*Indicators disaggregated by gender

Indicators to be developed

The Committee agrees with the main priorities set out for the further development of structural indicators in the field of employment. In line with the priorities for the ongoing work of the Committee in improving employment indicators, emphasis should be placed on developing indicators of vacancies, childcare facilities, adjusted gender pay gap, quality of work and poverty, unemployment and inactivity traps.

The Committee supports in particular further work on measuring public and private spending on education and training.

The Committee's ongoing work on improving the measurement of regional employment and unemployment disparities should be taken into account in the revisions of the lists of structural indicators.

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