



The Employment Committee

Opinion of the Employment Committee

on the Commission proposal for a Council Decision on Guidelines for the Employment Policies of the Member States contained in COM (2011) 6

In line with the provisions of Article 148 of the Treaty, the Employment Committee has examined the Commission's proposal for a Council decision on guidelines for the Employment Policies of the Member States. The Committee also met with representatives of the social partners at European level and held a constructive exchange of views in the context of the discussion on the Employment Guidelines.

In November 2010, the Employment Committee carried out a country examination on the draft National Reform Programmes (NRPs) to prepare the launch of the first European Semester in the context of Europe 2020. Given the preliminary character of the draft NRPs, more detailed information is expected to be provided in the final NRPs due in April 2011. Nonetheless, the Employment Committee highlighted that the current high levels of unemployment, tight budget constraints and weak economic growth determine the prospects of job creation and employment. In light of these conditions, the Committee identified a number of priority areas for policy reform, in line with the Employment Guidelines, and stressed the need for a stronger emphasis on efficiency and targeting of existing measures.

Given the developing state of the NRPs, the Employment Committee supports the Commission proposal to maintain the Employment Guidelines as laid down in Council Decision 2010/707/EU of 21 October 2010 for 2011 so as to guide the completion of the full NRPs. The Committee recalls that employment guidelines should form the basis for any country-specific recommendations that the Council may address to the Member States under Article 148(4) of the TFEU, in parallel with the country-specific recommendations addressed to the Member States under Article 121(4) of that Treaty.