

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

of 17 June 1999

on equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities

(1999/C 186/02)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

- (1) an essential objective of the Community, as identified in the coordinated European employment strategy, is to promote a high level of employment;
- (2) in the 1999 employment guidelines⁽¹⁾, guideline 9 acknowledges the need for the Member States to 'give special attention to the needs of the disabled, ethnic minorities and other groups and individuals who may be disadvantaged, and develop appropriate forms of preventive and active policies to promote their integration into the labour market';
- (3) in its recommendation of 24 July 1986⁽²⁾, the Council recognised the key issues of the integration of people with disabilities in vocational training and employment;
- (4) the Community Charter on the fundamental social rights of workers of 9 December 1989 stipulates in point 26: 'All disabled persons, whatever the origin and nature of their disability, must be entitled to additional concrete measures aimed at improving their social and professional integration. These measures must concern, in particular, according to the capacities of the beneficiaries, vocational training, ergonomics, accessibility, mobility, means of transport and housing.';
- (5) in their resolution of 20 December 1996 on equality of opportunity for people with disabilities⁽³⁾, the Council and the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council reaffirmed their commitment to the principle of equality of opportunity in the development of comprehensive policies in the field of disability;
- (6) the Commission of the European Communities formulated fundamental policy issues concerning the disabled and employment in a document of 22 September 1998 entitled 'Raising employment levels of people with disabilities — the common challenge', taking into account the European employment strategy and the analysis of some key elements of the 1998 national action plans; the Commission also concluded that there must be a move away from piecemeal initiatives and that a coordinated strategy must be established;
- (7) in order to establish equal opportunities for people with disabilities with regard to securing, retaining and advancing in employment,
- Convention 159 and Recommendation 168 of the International Labour Organisation concerning vocational rehabilitation and employment (disabled persons) of 20 June 1983,
 - the Council of Europe Recommendation No R(92) 6 of 9 April 1992 for a coherent policy for disabled people, and
 - the standard rules on the equalisation of opportunities for persons with disabilities which were adopted in a United Nations General Assembly resolution on 20 December 1993,
- call upon the Member States to develop, evaluate and review support programmes for the integration of people with disabilities in various ways, in particular in the field of employment;
- (8) people with disabilities, despite individual successes and improvements, are still more likely to face barriers and disadvantages in finding and maintaining suitable employment and in fully participating in the economic and social life of their communities,

HEREBY ADOPTS THIS RESOLUTION:

1. The Council acknowledges and welcomes the serious efforts made and planned by the Member States to develop and implement policies aimed at integrating people with disabilities into the labour market, in particular within the

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 69, 12.3.1999, p. 2.⁽²⁾ OJ L 225, 12.8.1986, p. 43.⁽³⁾ OJ C 12, 13.1.1997, p. 1.

framework of the European employment strategy; it welcomes equally the new impetus by the annual employment guidelines.

2. The Council underlines that the national action plans for employment provide a comprehensive platform within which the abovementioned policies should be strengthened. Member States are therefore called upon:
 - (a) within the framework of their national employment policies, and in cooperation with the social partners and non-governmental organisations for people with disabilities, to place particular emphasis on the promotion of employment opportunities for people with disabilities and to develop suitable preventive and active policies for the specific promotion of their integration into the labour market in the private sector, including self-employment, and in the public sector,
 - (b) to make full use of the existing and future possibilities of the European Structural Funds, in particular the European Social Fund, and relevant Community initiatives, to promote equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities,
 - (c) also in the above context, to attach particular attention to the possibilities offered by the development of the information society for opening new employment opportunities but also challenges for people with disabilities.
 3. The Council welcomes the initiative of the social partners at European level to identify good practices and invites the social partners at all levels to play an increasing role in creating improved employment opportunities and negotiated work organisation changes in cooperation with people with disabilities.
 4. The Council invites people with disabilities themselves and their organisations to make their contribution towards the goal of equal employment opportunities by sharing and exchanging their experience with all those involved in the labour market.
 5. The Council encourages the Community Institutions to promote equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities within their own services, by enacting rules while taking full advantage of existing legal instruments and practices.
 6. The Council calls upon the Commission to work together with the Member States, in particular within the framework of the European employment guidelines and in accordance with the mainstreaming principle, to monitor and analyse the development of the employment of people with disabilities on the basis of comparable data and to develop new strategies and campaigns, taking into consideration national, regional and local differences.
 7. The Council affirms that, in the framework of a coherent global policy, equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities will be enhanced if specific attention is given to recruitment and retention of employees, promotion, training, life-long learning and development, and protection against unfair dismissal, and appropriate support provided in areas such as:
 - workplace accommodation, such as technical equipment including access to new information and communication technologies,
 - access to the place of work,
 - qualifications and skills required at work, and
 - access to vocational guidance and placement services.
 8. The Council notes the Commission's intention to make a proposal for a legal instrument covering equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
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