

Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on Community incentive measures in the field of employment

(2000/C 337 E/39)

(Text with EEA relevance)

COM(2000) 459 final — 2000/0195(COD)

(Submitted by the Commission on 20 July 2000)

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL
OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 129 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions,

Acting in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 251 of the Treaty,

Whereas:

- (1) Article 3 of the Treaty sets out that the activities of the Community shall include the promotion of coordination between employment policies of the Member States with a view to enhancing their effectiveness by developing a coordinated strategy for employment.
- (2) Title VIII of the Treaty, and particularly Article 127 thereof, establishes that the Community shall complement the action of Member States where necessary; and that the objective of a high level of employment shall be taken into consideration in the formulation and implementation of Community policies and activities.
- (3) Title VIII of the Treaty, and particularly Article 128 thereof, establishes the procedures by which Member States and the Community shall work towards developing a coordinated strategy for employment and particularly for promoting a skilled, trained and adaptable workforce and labour markets responsive to economic change; in particular, that the Council adopts guidelines for achieving the objective of developing a coordinated strategy for employment and may make recommendations to the Member States; and that the Council and the Commission make a joint annual report to the European Council on the employment situation.
- (4) The Extraordinary European Council Meeting on Employment in Luxembourg, 20 and 21 November 1997, launched an overall strategy for employment, the European Employment Strategy, encompassing the coordination of Member States' employment policies on the basis of commonly agreed employment guidelines (the Luxembourg process), the continuation and development

of a coordinated macro-economic policy and an efficient internal market, with a view to laying the foundations for sustainable growth, new dynamism and a climate of confidence conducive to boosting employment; this strategy also involves the harnessing in a more systematic way of all Community policies in support of employment, both framework policies and support policies.

- (5) The European Council of Lisbon has agreed a new strategic goal for the Union to build a competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy capable of sustaining economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion and so to regain the conditions for full employment. To this end, it has set a new range of targets and benchmarks and introduced them in a new open method of coordination at all levels coupled with a stronger guiding and coordination role for the European Council, to ensure more coherent strategic direction and effective monitoring of progress. Moreover, it requested that the mid-term review of the Luxembourg process should give a new impetus by enriching the guidelines with more concrete targets establishing closer links with other relevant policy areas.
- (6) Article 129 enables the Council to adopt incentive measures designed to encourage cooperation between Member States and to support their action in the field of employment through initiatives aimed at developing exchanges of information and best practices, providing comparative analysis and advice as well as promoting innovative approaches and evaluating experiences, in particular by recourse to pilot projects.
- (7) In the past, the European Parliament has strongly supported Community activities in support of employment.
- (8) The European Council has determined that comparable and reliable statistics and indicators in the field of employment and the labour market should be defined and collected.
- (9) Council Decision 2000/98/EC of 24 January 2000 established the Employment Committee on the basis of Article 130 of the Treaty to promote coordination between the Member States on employment and labour market policies. ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 29, 4.2.2000, p. 21-22.

(10) A financial reference amount has been included in this Decision, without prejudice to the powers of the budgetary authority as they are defined by the Treaty.

(11) Council Decision 98/171/EC of 23 February 1998 on Community activities concerning analysis, research and cooperation in the field of employment and the labour market which currently provides for such activities will cease to apply on 31 December 2000 ⁽¹⁾.

(12) The present Decision shall provide for the continuation and development of the activities launched on the basis of Council Decision 98/171/EC.

(13) In compliance with Article 2 of Council Decision 1999/468/EC of 28 June 1999 laying down the procedures for the exercise of implementing powers conferred on the Commission ⁽²⁾, measures for the implementation of this Decision should be adopted by use of the advisory procedure provided for in Article 3 of that Decision,

HAVE DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

Establishment of Community activities

1. Community activities concerning analysis, research and cooperation among the Member States in the field of employment and the labour market shall be carried out in the period from 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2005.

2. These activities shall also contribute to the development of the coordinated strategy for employment through the analysis, monitoring and support of actions carried out in the Member States, with due regard for the latter's responsibilities in this field.

Article 2

Objectives

1. The activities referred to in this Decision are those directly linked to the implementation of the Employment Title of the TEC. Their main task is the development, planning, monitoring, follow up to, and evaluation of, the European Employment Strategy with a strong forward-looking emphasis.

2. In particular, it aims at fostering cooperation between Member States in analysis, research and monitoring of labour market policy, identifying best practices and promoting exchanges and transfers of information and experience, developing the approach and contents of the European Employment Strategy, and enacting an active information policy in this domain.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 63, 4.3.1998, p. 26-28.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 184, 17.7.1999, p. 23.

Article 3

Community measures

1. With a view to achieving the objectives referred to in Article 2, The Community measures will cover the following activities:

1. Activities which, within the agreed policy aim of raising the employment rate, underpin a more strategic approach to employment policy in the EU through analysis and evaluation of employment trends, framework policy conditions, assessment of policy options and the impact of community policies. To the maximum possible extent, analysis will be gender specific.

2. Activities aimed at providing support for Member States efforts in evaluating their National Action Plans in a consistent and coordinated manner; a special evaluation exercise will be completed by the 5-year anniversary of the Luxembourg Job Summit, at the end of the first period of the implementation of the guidelines.

3. Activities aimed at bringing together and exchanging experiences in Member States, both in terms of the pillars and of individual guidelines, as defined in the annual Employment Policy Guidelines for the Member States. Increasing this cooperation will help Member States in developing their employment policies in the light of the lessons learned.

4. Activities aimed at the monitoring of the European Employment Strategy in the Member States, in particular through the European Employment Observatory.

5. Technical and scientific work needed for developing common indicators, improving and completing statistics, benchmarking performances and the exchange of information on best practices, inasmuch as this is more cost effective to undertake at Community level rather than at the level of individual Member States.

6. Prospective analysis on policy areas of importance to the Commission and Member States, for the development of the European Employment Strategy through forward analysis, new fields of research and the mainstreaming of the employment impact of Community policies.

7. Activities to support the input of European Union presidencies to create a special focus on priority elements of the Strategy, special events of high international importance or of general interest to the Union and the Member States.

2. In implementing the measures referred to in paragraph 1, the Commission shall take into account the statistical data, studies and project reports available from international organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Article 4

Outputs

The output of the activities mentioned in Article 3 will vary according to the type of activity involved. They will include the Employment in Europe report and other publications, working documents, reports to be submitted to the Council and the Commission — in particular the Joint Employment Report —, national seminars for example in preparation of the National Action Plans, seminars on employment policy or the organisation of important international events on priority topics or of general importance. Greater use will be made of Internet facilities for dissemination of results (web publishing, Internet chats and seminars) and as a tool to foster cooperation and exchange of information.

Article 5

Consistency and complementarity

The Commission shall ensure that the measures implemented under this Decision and the other relevant Community programmes and initiatives (such as the social inclusion programme and the Framework programme for research, technological development and demonstration activities) are consistent with each other and complementary. The outcomes of other Community initiatives could be used as inputs into the actions covered by this Decision, and results from the activities mentioned in this decision could be used as inputs in other Community initiatives.

Article 6

Participation of third countries

1. The activities shall be open to participation by:

- the countries of the European Economic Area,
- the candidate countries of central and eastern Europe (CEECs), in accordance with the conditions established in the Europe Agreements, in their additional protocols, and in the decisions of the respective Association Councils,
- Cyprus, Malta and Turkey on the basis of bilateral agreements to be concluded with these countries,
- other Mediterranean countries in the context of the European Union's relations with those countries.

2. The cost of the participation referred to in paragraph 1 shall be borne either by the countries concerned or under the Community budget headings covering implementation of the

cooperation, association or partnership agreements with those countries in the area concerned.

Article 7

Implementation

1. The Commission shall implement these activities in accordance with this Decision.

2. The Commission shall be assisted by an advisory committee composed of the representatives of the Member States and chaired by the representative of the Commission (hereinafter referred to as 'the Committee').

3. Where reference is made to this paragraph, the advisory procedure laid down in Article 3 of Council Decision 1999/468/EC shall apply, in compliance with Article 7, paragraph 3 and Article 8.

4. The representative of the Commission shall in particular consult the Committee on:

- the general guidelines for the implementation of the programme;
- the annual budgets and the distribution of funding between measures;
- the annual plan of work for the implementation of the programme's actions, and the Commission proposals for selection criteria for financial support;

5. To ensure the consistency and complementarity of this programme with other measures referred to in Article 5, the Commission shall keep the Committee regularly informed about other relevant Community action. Where appropriate, the Commission shall establish regular and structured cooperation between this Committee and the committees established for other relevant policies, instruments and actions.

Article 8

Links to be established

The Commission shall establish the necessary links with the Employment Committee as well as with the social partners within the framework of the activities referred to in this Decision.

The Commission shall inform the European social partners at their request of the results of its implementing activities.

Article 9

Financing

1. The financial reference amount for the implementation of the Community activities referred to in this Decision for the period 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2005 shall be Euro 55 million.

2. The annual appropriations shall be authorised by the budgetary authority within the limits of the financial perspective.

3. The Commission may have recourse to technical and/or administrative assistance, to the mutual benefit of the Commission and of the beneficiaries, as well as to support expenditure.

Article 10

Evaluation and reporting

1. The Commission shall identify performance indicators for the actions, monitor achievement of interim results, and carry out independent evaluations in the third year (mid-term) and early during the last year (ex-post) of the programme. The evaluations shall particularly assess the impact achieved and the efficiency of the use of resources, and provide decision-oriented recommendations for adjustments and the eventual extension of the programme.

2. The Commission shall make the results of actions undertaken and the evaluation reports publicly available.

3. In the light of the evaluations, the Commission may propose an extension of the programme.

4. The Commission shall submit an interim report on the results of the activities to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions by 31 December 2003 at the latest, and a final report by 31 December 2006 at the latest. It shall incorporate into these reports information on Community financing within the framework of the programme and on consistency and complementarity with other relevant programmes, actions and initiatives, as well as the relevant evaluation results.

Article 11

Publication

This Decision shall be published in the *Official Journal of the European Communities*.
