



EU-POLICY UPDATE

EMPLOYMENT - APRIL 2015

EU developments		
March 2015	Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council	<p>The Council of the EU adopted conclusions on inclusive labour markets highlighting the fact that employment remains the best tool to be out of poverty and ensure social inclusion, even if in-work poverty exists and should be addressed. To ensure inclusive labour markets, the Council calls for several measures such as social investment in skills, individualised approach, improving job quality, combatting discriminations in employment, flexicurity-based approach and activation measures.</p> <p>The Council also discussed the European Semester process, setting objectives for the year coming such as preventing and reducing long-term unemployment, addressing youth unemployment, modernising social protection system, fostering job quality and supporting labour mobility. The Council also calls for better taking into account the social dimension in the European Semester.</p> <p>Read the conclusions</p>
February 2015	Public consultation on long-term unemployment	<p>The European Commission launched a public consultation on tackling long-term unemployment. The Commission is seeking views and insights from stakeholders on how to improve service provision to long-term unemployed in order to shorten their unemployment spell.</p> <p>The aim is to contribute to an impact assessment preparing a proposal for a Council Recommendation on the integration in the labour market of the long-term unemployed. The consultation will be open until 15 May 2015. EURO CITIES will draft a statement to answer to the consultation.</p> <p>Public consultation</p>
February 2015	Youth employment initiative	<p>As the youth unemployment remains high in Europe (seven millions of young unemployed Europeans), the European Commission proposed to increase the pre-financing available for the Youth employment initiative (YEI) by 1 billion euro. The objective is to help 650.000 young unemployed people in 2015.</p> <p>The European Commission asked the European Parliament and the Council of the EU to adopt this proposal quickly to start implementing the initiative as soon as possible. Member states are expected to make funding available</p>

		<p>immediately to project beneficiaries through advance payments, which will be closely monitored by the Commission.</p> <p>During the debate on the proposal in the European Parliament, several MEPs called for a greater involvement of local authorities as they are better aware of the local realities and needs.</p> <p>More information</p>
December 2014 - February 2015	Adoption of Operational Programmes of the European Social Fund	<p>Most of the Operational Programmes (OPs) for the European Social Fund (ESF) 2014-2020 have been adopted. They are strategic documents that set out priorities for spending money allocated to the ESF, agreed between the European Commission and either a member state or a region. As they determine thematic priorities and their funding allocations in a given area, they influence how cities can use the ESF too.</p> <p>More information on the adopted OPs</p>
February 2015	Joint hearing on reforms of educational systems	<p>The employment and education committees of the European Parliament held a joint hearing on reform of educational systems, focusing on lifelong guidance to fight against early school leaving and unemployment.</p> <p>Experts insisted on the necessity to act to reduce early school leaving, through the support to all learners, including the ones with special needs. Involving parents and children in the implementation of measures reducing early school leaving, better training teachers, developing VET systems and developing links between schools and employers are solutions that can help reduce early school leaving.</p> <p>The public hearing will provide background information for the EMPL committee initiative report on “Creating a competitive EU labour market for the 21st century: matching skills and qualifications with demand and job opportunities as a way to recover from the crisis”.</p> <p>More information on the hearing</p>
February 2015	EUROSTAT data on minimum wages	<p>EUROSTAT published data regarding national minimum wages across the EU in January 2015. The report shows that monthly minimum wages varied by one to ten across the 22 Member States which have one. However, when adjusted for differences in purchasing power, the disparities between Member States are reduced to a ratio of one to four in purchasing power standards.</p> <p>Bulgaria has the lowest minimum wage (184 EUR per month) and Luxembourg has the highest (1.923 EUR per month). Apart from Greece when it has decreased and Ireland when it remained stable, national minimum wages have increased in every Member State since 2008.</p> <p>More information on the report</p>

January 2015	Investment Plan	<p>The European Commission presented its proposal on an Investment Plan to the European Parliament and the Council of the EU. The plan is for the period 2015-2017 and a main element is the creation of a new €315 billion European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) to be co-financed by the EU (16 million EUR) and the European Investment Bank (5 million EUR) and to leverage funds from public and private entities. This fund will support strategic investments in infrastructure. It is foreseen that the European Parliament and the Council of the EU will adopt it before the summer.</p> <p>The International Labour Organisation has produced a report to estimate the impact of the Investment plan on job creation. According to this report, three scenarios are possible:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creation of 1.8 million of direct and indirect jobs (0.8% of employment) if the leveraging of the private sector investments takes place 2. Creation of 2 million jobs if condition 1 is fulfilled and if funds are also allocated to projects having the best and most equitable net job gain (investing in Member States with greatest needs and/or narrowing labour market disparities) 3. Creation of 2.1 million jobs if conditions 1 and 2 are fulfilled and if 5% of financing goes to skills development and active labour market measures. <p>More information on the Investment Plan</p> <p>More information on the ILO report of the ILO</p>
January 2015	Employment and social developments annual review 2014	<p>The European Commission published its employment and social developments annual review for 2014. It shows that unemployment is still high and employment growth is concentrated in temporary and part-time jobs. Long-term unemployment has more than doubled, especially among young people in many countries.</p> <p>The report underlines the need for investment in human capital to support productivity and sustain EU social welfare model. However, the report insists on the fact that increasing supply of skilled human capital needs to be matched by supply of quality jobs. Restoring socio-economic convergence amongst Member States should also be an urgent concern of the EU.</p> <p>Employment and social developments annual review 2014</p>
December 2014	Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council meeting	<p>The Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) met in December to discuss key measures to tackle youth unemployment. They recommended to act for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better matching of competences and skills with the

		<p>demands and needs of the labour market</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective transition from education to work (inform young people on the labour market, offered them apprenticeship, paid traineeships and language skills) • Developing entrepreneurial skills among young people • Investing in supporting the economic and employment recovery • Stronger links between the institutions in charge of education and training (in particular schools and universities) and companies • Reforming VET systems <p>Conclusions of the Council</p>
December 2014	Annual Growth Survey	<p>The European Commission published the Annual Growth Survey 2015 which is part of the European Semester process. The report shows that unemployment is slowly decreasing but remains at high levels in the EU-28 (around 11%) and long-term unemployment is still rising. Youth unemployment remains also at very high levels, but is showing signs of improvement (21.6%). The proportion of young people (15-24) not in employment, education or training (NEET) also remained high (13.2% for female and 12.7% for male). As a consequence of these trends, the EU employment rate is still decreasing and the EU 2020 Strategy's target of 75% employment rate will be difficult to reach. However, according to the projected GDP growth, employment should improve slightly in the future.</p> <p>To tackle this situation, the European Commission recommends to coordinate investments, to renew commitment to structural reforms and to pursue fiscal responsibility.</p> <p>Annual Growth Survey 2015</p>
December 2014	Committee of the Regions opinion on skills	<p>The Committee of the Regions adopted an opinion on the "Recognition of skills and competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning". In this opinion, the Committee of the Regions enhances the importance of life long learning and the necessity to recognise both formal and informal (e.g. volunteer work) learning.</p> <p>The Committee of the Regions asks the European Commission to address the issue of skills recognition within the revision of policy priorities in the framework of the renewed Europe 2020 strategy and to involve local and regional authorities in this process as they are a valuable source of knowledge on employment, education and skills.</p> <p>More information on the opinion</p>
November 2014	Resolution on employment and social aspects of the Europe 2020	<p>The European Parliament adopted a resolution on employment and social aspects of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The Parliament calls for the alignment of the Annual Growth Survey with the Europe 2020 Strategy</p>

	Strategy	<p>targets in the field of education, employment and poverty and asks the European Commission to take social considerations into account in the European Semester process.</p> <p>The European Parliament would also like the EU to avoid that increase in the employment rate is caused by an increase of precarious jobs such as zero-hour contracts. Finally, it calls on the European Commission to establish a specific youth unemployment rate target in the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy.</p> <p>More information on the resolution</p>
Relevant funding calls and information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erasmus+: Strategic partnerships in the field of education, training and youth, deadline: 30 April 2015 • Horizon 2020: Lifelong learning for young adults: better policies for growth and inclusion in Europe, deadline: 28 May 2015 • URBACT III, call for action-planning networks, deadline, 16 June 2015. Other calls are expected in 2015. 		
Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The European Commission published a report on Facing the crisis, the coping strategies of unemployed people in Europe showing that increasing unemployment puts more and more people at risk of poverty as well as social exclusion and creates a loss of confidence in public bodies. • List of National coordinators Youth Guarantee 		
Reports from past events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU youth conference Riga • Youth Guarantee implementation at the local level: The conference aimed at enhancing local authorities' role in the fight against youth unemployment. EUROCITIES explained that cities should be granted a role in the implementation of the youth guarantee and presented to the audience three good practices from Edinburgh, Belfast and Oulu in favour of youth employment. 		
Upcoming events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs and growth through green infrastructure, Green Week, 3 June 2015, Brussels • Workshop on Education, Employment and Social Services for vulnerable young adults, European Social Network, 4-5 June 2015, The Hague • EUROCITIES Conference Cities for Accessibility - together towards barrier-free Europe, Lisbon, 18-19 June 2015 • Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) meeting on progress report equal treatment Directive, European Semester 2015, examination of national Reform Programmes and implementation of 2014 CSR, Assessment of the 2015 package of Council Recommendations on cross-cutting issues, youth unemployment, 19 June 2015 		