



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

from : Permanent Representatives Committee (Part I)
to : COUNCIL (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs)

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Subject: Employment policies for a competitive, low-carbon, resource-efficient and green economy
- Draft Council Conclusions

Delegations will find in the Annex draft Council Conclusions on which agreement has been reached at the level of the Permanent Representatives Committee (Part I).

The EPSCO Council is invited to adopt the draft Conclusions.

Draft Council Conclusions
Employment policies for a competitive, low-carbon,
resource-efficient and green economy

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING

1. The European Commission Communication of 3 June 2009 "A Shared Commitment for Employment"¹, which stresses that Europe must not only tackle the recession but must turn it into an opportunity to create a more productive, more innovative, more inclusive, better skilled low-carbon economy, and that 'green jobs' have the potential to become a key growth segment of future EU labour markets;
2. The Council Conclusions of 21 October 2009 "Towards sustainability: Eco-efficient economy in the context of the post-2010 Lisbon Agenda and the EU Sustainable Development Strategy"², which invite Member States to use employment and education policies to reduce current skills gaps for eco-efficiency and to facilitate workers' employability in higher growth sectors such as eco-efficient construction and housing, sustainable transport, renewable energy and recycling, while encouraging the creation of new green jobs;

¹ COM(2009) 257.

² 14891/09.

3. The Council Conclusions of 7 June 2010 "New skills for new jobs – the way forward"³, which highlight the importance of improving the efficiency of education and training systems in order to develop key competences and to better meet the needs of the labour market in emerging and fast-growing sectors, including green sectors;
4. The European Parliament Resolution of 16 June 2010 on Europe 2020⁴, which calls for the adoption of an ambitious green jobs strategy by the end of the year;
5. The European Council Conclusions of 17 June 2010⁵ adopting the Europe 2020 Strategy for jobs and growth, guided by headline targets aiming inter alia at raising to 75% the employment rate for women and men aged 20-64, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20% compared to 1990 levels, increasing the share of renewables in final energy consumption to 20%, and moving towards a 20% increase in energy efficiency;
6. The Council Recommendation of 13 July 2010 on Broad Economic Policy Guidelines of the Member States and of the Union⁶, in particular Guideline 1, which stresses that "where taxes may have to rise, this should, where possible, be done in conjunction with measures to make tax systems more employment-, environment- and growth-friendly, for example by shifting the tax burden towards environmentally harmful activities";
7. The European Parliament Resolution of 7 September 2010 "Developing the job potential of a new sustainable economy", which calls for a new sustainable economy, optimising employment potential, facing skills needs and ensuring decent work and socially fair transition;

³ 10841/10.

⁴ RC-B7-0348/2010.

⁵ EUCO 13/1/10 REV 1.

⁶ OJ L 191, 23.7.2010, p. 28.

8. The European Commission Communication of 28 October 2010 "An integrated industrial policy for the globalisation era - Putting competitiveness and sustainability at centre stage"⁷ which emphasises the importance of a strong, competitive and diversified industrial manufacturing value chain that can provide the resources and many of the solutions for the societal challenges facing the EU. The Communication calls for EU industry to take the lead in the transition to the low-carbon, resource- and energy-efficient economy, noting that combating climate change and increasing resource and energy efficiency can achieve cost reductions and that workers will need support, through e.g. new skills, to manage processes linked to the modernising of industrial structures;
9. The Council Decision on Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States of 21 October 2010 and in particular Guideline 7, which stresses that Member States should promote job creation in all areas, including green employment;
10. The Council conclusions of 18-19 November 2010 on education for sustainable development;
11. The European Commission Communication of 23 November 2010 "An Agenda for new skills and jobs";

TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION

12. The opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 16 September 2010 on green jobs;

⁷ 15487/10

13. The opinion of the Employment Committee of 10 November 2010 "The Employment dimension of tackling environmental challenges" and the supporting report "Towards a greener labour market";
14. The Commission's report "Employment in Europe 2009", in particular Chapter 3: Climate change and labour market outcomes, which stresses that the European labour market is affected by climate change and adaptation to it, and that employment policies can help to facilitate the transition to a greener economy;
15. The outcome of the Ministerial Conference "Promoting green employment: a major and indispensable driver behind a successful transition towards a competitive, low-carbon and green economy" held in Brussels on 28 and 29 September 2010;
16. The outcome of the conference "Skills for a greener economy: implications for public employment services", held in Brussels on 1 and 2 July 2010;
17. The growing body of international studies and policy documents produced by the OECD, ILO, UNEP and others on the subject of green jobs and the employment dimension of green growth and tackling climate change, which highlights the need for anticipatory approaches and for measures preparing the transition to a green economy, and which sets out globally-shared views and interest in these topics;⁸

⁸ Whenever reference to the OECD is made or implied in this text, it is to be understood that the right of participation of all Member States in the work of that organisation should be ensured.

EMPHASISING THAT

18. The evolution of markets for products and services, R&D and innovation policy focusing on climate change and resource-efficiency challenges, new legal and regulatory frameworks (e.g. performance standards), recovery packages (with a green dimension) and market-based instruments (such as emissions trading, energy taxation, subsidies) will change our industrial and economic structures towards a competitive, low-carbon, resource-efficient and green economy in the medium and long term;
19. The capacity to innovate in new green technologies and sectors has become one of the key factors of competitiveness at the international level. Industry (especially SMEs), in the face of the challenges of globalisation, is adjusting its production processes and products to a competitive, low-carbon, resource-efficient and green economy;
20. Supportive labour markets and a short, medium- and long-term vision of the skills needs and availability of workers are essential for supporting and developing a low-carbon and green economy, as well as for exploiting the potential of green innovation to the full;
21. To achieve the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy, interlocking policies are crucial: environmental, economic, educational, social and employment policies should be consistent with each other and mutually reinforcing;
22. Regulatory frameworks and policies that are clearly defined, transparent and stable – and yet responsive to change – are particularly important for the greening of the economy, including for investments that lead to job creation;

23. The transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient and green economy, as well as climate change itself, will affect European labour markets: there will be sectoral, regional and skills impacts as well as impacts on the composition of the workforce. To make a positive impact on job transformation and job creation, all relevant actors should take the appropriate measures in order to anticipate and manage change on labour markets;
24. Employment policies and the policy toolbox of the European Employment Strategy, in particular the employment guidelines and the flexicurity concept, provide a range of ways to ease the transition to a green economy and to seize job creation opportunities;
25. In the pursuit of a competitive, low-carbon, resource-efficient and green economy, special attention should be paid to the need to sustain and increase productivity and to encourage quality in employment;
26. An overall greening of jobs, spread across traditional as well as emerging sectors, will foster the transition to a competitive, low-carbon, resource-efficient and green economy, and contribute to the fight against climate change;
27. Stakeholders, including workers, companies, social partners, national, regional and local authorities, employment services, educational institutions and training operators, have an important role to play in dealing with the labour market implications of the transition to a competitive, low-carbon, resource-efficient and green economy;

THEREFORE INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION TO

28. Encourage mobility, work incentives and secure transition, in line with the flexicurity principles and given the transformation to be expected from an overall greening of the economy, paying special attention to the most vulnerable workers affected by these changes, to the people furthest from the labour market and to gender equality. The existing opportunities provided by the European Social Fund, together with other EU structural funds, could be mobilized by Member States, where appropriate, to support these objectives;
29. Promote exchange of good practice to further develop the instruments to identify and anticipate jobs and skills changes stemming from the transition to a competitive, low-carbon, resource-efficient and green economy; ensure lifelong learning and acquisition of skills linked to the greening of the economy; and ensure the appropriate recognition and transferability of acquired skills;
30. Build on the European Skills Competences and Occupations (ESCO) initiative so as to list and identify existing and emerging skill sets linked to the greening of the economy that can be clearly defined and extracted to support labour market information and guidance tools used by employment services to re-orientate jobseekers towards the opportunities available in the 'green' economy;
31. Endeavour to ensure that the jobs created or transformed by the greening of the economy are of good quality; promote, where appropriate, the organisation of representative bodies of employees and employers in new sectors in order to ensure good working conditions;

32. Promote occupational health and safety in jobs created or transformed due to the greening of economy; this implies paying special attention, in the current EU Strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work, to the identification of risks to occupational safety and health associated with green technologies and jobs linked to the greening of the economy, and ensuring that effective measures are in place to prevent familiar or potential new risks in these developing jobs;
33. Improve the anticipation and management of restructuring with the aim, inter alia, of contributing to better management of economic transition and of restructuring of the sectors in difficulty towards future-orientated activities, including those linked to a competitive, low-carbon, resource-efficient and greener economy; and support the role of social partners as a key element for the successful anticipation and management of change;
34. Foster partnerships to analyse quantitative and qualitative labour market trends in relevant sectors in the context of the greening of the economy and make recommendations based on the results of such assessments; this includes exploring the potential of Sector Councils on Employment and Skills at European level;
35. Promote the greening of workplaces and work organisation, especially through social dialogue: encourage enterprises, including SMEs, in line with the principles of corporate social responsibility, to lower their ecological impact and to use green technologies; inform enterprises of the contribution that greener work organisation and workplaces, more efficient use of IT in the organisation of work and more environmentally-friendly commuting and transport can make to the fight against climate change, as well as of the advantages they can bring in terms of lower costs and greater competitiveness; recognise that public authorities and public enterprises can lead by example in this development;

36. Taking into account their specificities, help SMEs to improve their capacity to deal with environmental challenges and take up opportunities in green markets, including in their efforts to implement the Environmental Compliance Assistance Programme; in this respect, environmental challenge should be considered as an opportunity to develop new working methods, products and/or services rather than as a threat involving extra costs;
37. Promote an EU-wide exchange of good practice on employment policy measures supportive of the greening of the economy within the context of the Mutual Learning Programme of the European Employment Strategy;
38. When designing climate or environmental policies or regulations, analyse the potential employment and skill impacts in a coordinated way in order to coordinate them appropriately with labour market policies, in line with existing European and national systems;

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES TO

39. Encourage ownership in the transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient and green economy by all relevant labour market actors and stakeholders: companies, workers, social partners, national, regional and local authorities, employment services, educational institutions and training delivery bodies;
40. Promote the acquisition, by more young people especially by young women, of skills required for jobs linked to the greening of the economy, in particular the so-called 'STEM' skills (science, technology, engineering and mathematics); promote lifelong learning; encourage pro-active sectoral training initiatives in green skills in old and new sectors; encourage the training of teachers and trainers for changes in jobs linked to the greening of the economy;

41. Support the role of employment services as important actors for brokering workforce transition towards greener occupations and improving the match between labour demand and supply, including by promoting their cooperation with the worlds of education and training as well as with firms and the social partners. Where appropriate, employment services could facilitate the uptake and delivery of green skills and qualifications by developing the right mix of information, guidance, orientation and training for job seekers and job changers wishing to pursue green career paths;
42. Use the framework of employment and environment indicators developed by the Employment Committee to ensure properly designed monitoring of reform measures aimed at addressing the employment aspects of climate change in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy. These indicators cover six areas: green jobs, green skills, green workplaces, green transition, green labour markets and green growth;
43. Explore the possibilities of making tax systems more employment-, environment- and growth-friendly, for example by shifting the tax burden towards environmentally harmful activities. Tax and benefits systems should provide better incentives to make work pay;

INVITES THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO

44. Investigate further the role of employment policies in tackling climate change and sustainability issues, and propose further steps in 2011 with a view to adopting guidance for employment policies aimed at preparing the labour market for the transition to a green economy;

45. Give particular attention to the need to develop measures that encompass environmental sustainability better than GDP;
46. Investigate how the relevant funds, in particular the European Social Fund as well as its partnership with the EIB where appropriate, could meet the challenge of the transition to a competitive, low-carbon, resource-efficient and green economy and the need to provide support to the workforce during the transition;
47. Pursue the consultation of the European Social Partners of 2002 and 2005 with a view to further developing an EU framework for anticipating, preparing and managing restructuring in a socially responsible way, taking into account the specific needs arising from the transition to a competitive, low-carbon, resource-efficient and green economy;
48. Improve the understanding of green employment challenges through cooperation with the OECD and the ILO and through dialogue and partnerships with other countries and within regions.⁹

⁹ Whenever reference to the OECD is made or implied in this text, it is to be understood that the right of participation of all Member States in the work of that organisation should be ensured.