



UNION EUROPEENNE DE L'ARTISANAT ET DES PETITES ET MOYENNES ENTREPRISES  
EUROPÄISCHE UNION DES HANDWERKS UND DER KLEIN- UND MITTELBETRIEBE  
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF CRAFT, SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES  
UNIONE EUROPEA DELL' ARTIGIANATO E DELLE PICCOLE E MEDIE IMPRESE

**Position of UEAPME  
on the new Employment Guidelines  
2008-2010**

The European Employment Strategy and the integrated guidelines for growth and jobs composed of the broad economy policy guidelines (macroeconomic and microeconomic guidelines) and the employment guidelines have clearly demonstrated their value added in terms of improving the EU economic performances and of creating a better employment situation.

These efforts have to be further pursued at EU and national levels in order to reap the full benefits of reforms undertaken during the past years.

Content:

The Employment Guidelines constitute an essential part of the Lisbon Strategy and of the integrated guidelines for growth and jobs. They play a central role for employment policies of the Member States. The Employment Strategy effectively contributes to improving the functioning of labour markets, raising employment levels and productivity growth and strengthening social inclusion.

Efficient employment policies are key for the economic and social development of the EU aiming at the creation of more and better jobs.

Taking into account the encouraging results on the labour markets, the first UEAPME recommendation is **continuity**. The current structure of the Employment guidelines should be unchanged. They have to be kept as simple as possible, meaning the necessity to limit the number of priorities, currently 8 guidelines, but at the same time dealing with the main priority areas.

In fact, the already existing overarching priorities are still valid:

1. attract and retain more people in employment, increase labour supply and modernise social protection systems
2. improve adaptability of workers and enterprises
3. increase investment in human capital through better education and skills.

Continuity should be accompanied by renewed efforts at the level of Member States for a full implementation of the 8 guidelines and the concrete joint objectives.

The second UEAPME recommendation is to **focus on the flexicurity concept**.

While we call for minimum changes in the guidelines, we consider it necessary to review Guideline N° 21 “*promote flexibility combined with employment security and reduce labour market segmentation, having due regard to the role of social partners*”.

This guideline should be adapted in a way which clearly explains and promotes the mutually reinforcing aspect of the integrated approach of flexicurity while mentioning the 4 pillars:

- *Flexible and reliable contractual arrangements*
- *Comprehensive lifelong learning (LLL);*
- *Effective active labour market policies (ALMP);*
- *Modern social security systems*

#### Governance process:

The third UEAPME recommendation is **to give more visibility** to the Employment guidelines. The Integrated Guidelines for growth and jobs and in particular the Employment guidelines are suffering from a lack of visibility notably at Member States' level.

While the national action programmes (NAP) should be prepared in close partnership with all stakeholders, most of the actors concerned are neither sufficiently consulted nor involved in the NAP process. The people best informed about the existence and the content of the European guidelines are the national administrations, which is certainly not the first aim of the Integrated guidelines and the Employment Strategy.

A strong effort has to be done at all levels to improve the visibility of the Integrated Guidelines and of the Employment guidelines. Their visibility would ensure more commitment from all parties to the Lisbon Strategy.

More commitment from the Member States and social partners should avoid the frequent tendency to pick and choose the less difficult issues and measures, while the most difficult part of the necessary reforms are set aside.

The fourth UEAPME recommendation is about a **renewed partnership**. The integration of the economic and employment guidelines requires a strong coordination between the various stakeholders. Unfortunately as far as we can evaluate the situation through our national members, we see a lack of coordination and a decrease of social partners' involvement in the preparation of the NAPs.

This unsatisfactory partnership between the various stakeholders does not facilitate the empowerment of the legitimate actors in the process.

Moreover the request for a better involvement of national parliaments has not been fully satisfactory at national level.

#### Conclusion:

Whereas we see no need for a drastic change in the content of the employment guidelines, we consider it necessary to include the new flexicurity concept.

Concerning the governance UEAPME calls on Member States for renewed efforts in terms of visibility, empowerment of the various actors and stronger partnerships.

Brussels, 05/12/07