

Press release – EU must prioritise fight against youth unemployment, homelessness and poverty



Parliament adopted a resolution to feed into the forthcoming EU [Employment Guidelines](#) on Friday with 550 votes in favour, 128 against and 10 abstentions, calling for radical measures to cushion the employment and social shock caused by the pandemic.

Quote

Rapporteur [José Gusmão](#) (GUE/NGL, PT) said: *“The report on the employment guidelines adopted today shows a complete reversal of the positions that have dominated the European institutions for many years. In a context in which the problems caused by the Covid-19 pandemic are further aggravated by precarious employment relations and the deregulation of the labour market, this report proposes an alternative path that is as clear as it is urgent.”*

The fight against youth unemployment, homelessness and poverty must be prioritised through a reinforced [Youth Guarantee](#), a strong [Child Guarantee](#) for tackling child poverty and the [Housing First](#) approach, the text says. MEPs insist that more efforts are needed to close the [gender pay](#) -, [pension and employment gaps](#) and that the gender impact of social and employment policies should be closely monitored.

In light of the social and employment consequences of the COVID-19 crisis, and to strengthen the EU response to similar future crises, MEPs call for a revision of the [EU Employment Guidelines](#), which underpin the country-specific recommendations of the [European Semester](#).

Allow for fiscal flexibility as long as needed

MEPs consider that the so-called '[General escape clause](#)', that gives member states unprecedented fiscal flexibility to protect employment and finance public health and social services, has to reflect the scale and duration of the COVID-19 crisis.

Only companies that are not registered in tax havens, that respect the applicable collective agreements and that do not pay dividends or bonuses should be allowed to apply for financial assistance from the [SURE](#) mechanism for short-time work, they add.

Background

The Employment Guidelines ([Article 148 of the TFEU](#)) present strategic objectives for national employment policies in the fields of employment, education and social inclusion. The Council will adopt the act after consulting the European Parliament. The Guidelines serve as a basis for [country-specific recommendations](#) (part of the [European Semester](#)) in the different areas concerned.

The European Commission presented this year's revision of the Employment Guidelines in February 2020, in order to integrate the four dimensions of the [Annual Strategy for Sustainable Growth](#) (ASGS) and, in particular, the dimension of environmental sustainability to reflect the vision of a [strong social Europe for just transitions](#).