

EURO-LATIN AMERICAN PARLAMENTARY ASSEMBLY



RESOLUTION

Employment protection and creation strategies, especially for women and young people

based on the report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Human Exchanges, the Environment, Education and Culture

EP Co-rapporteur
LAC Co-rapporteur

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE)
María de los Ángeles Moreno Uriegas (EU-Mexico JPC)

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Employment protection and creation strategies, especially for women and young people

The Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly,

- having regard to the declarations resulting from the six summits of heads of state and government of Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union, held in Rio de Janeiro (28 and 29 June 1999), Madrid (17 and 18 May 2002), Guadalajara (28 and 29 May 2004), Vienna (11 and 13 May 2006), Lima (15 and 17 May 2008) and Madrid (18 May 2010),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 2009 entitled ‘A shared commitment for employment’,
- having regard to the Commission communication and green paper of 2008 entitled ‘Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between the generations’,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 2008 entitled ‘Stronger support for reconciling professional, private and family life’,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 2010 entitled ‘Europe 2020: a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’,
- having regard to the Council decision of 2010 on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States,
- having regard to the Mar de Plata Declaration and programme of action adopted at the XXth Iberoamerican summit of 4 December 2010,
- having regard to the Council’s conclusions of 8 June 2009 on ‘Flexicurity in times of crisis’,
- having regard to Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006, on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast),
- having regard to the Joint Employment Report for 2008-2009 adopted by the EPSCO Council of March 2009,
- having regard to the Commission report of 18 December 2009, entitled ‘Equality between women and men - 2010’,
- having regard to the 2007 report of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions entitled ‘Working conditions in the European Union: the gender perspective’,
- having regard to the EU’s Economic Recovery Plan,

- having regard to the document of 2008 ‘Training paths: present practices and future needs for the integration of young people into the labour market’,
 - having regard to the ‘Quito consensus’ following the Tenth Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean of 9 August 2007,
 - having regard to the CEPAL report of April 2009 entitled ‘Impact of the financial crisis on Latin America’,
 - having regard to the CEPAL report of January 2009 entitled ‘The current financial crisis and its effects in Latin America and the Caribbean’,
 - having regard to the ILO report of 2008 ‘Global employment trends for youth’,
 - having regard to Rule 16 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the world economy has undergone profound changes following the recent economic and financial crisis, and decent and stable job creation now needs to be an urgent priority for governments,
 - B. whereas, despite the predictions of a mild recovery, the signs point to a major slowdown of growth in Europe, as well as only a sluggish rise in consumption in the eurozone; whereas, in addition, unemployment has shot up and has in some countries reached record levels in terms of recent history,
 - C. whereas, owing to economic globalisation, the economic problems facing the United States and Europe are liable to affect the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean, both commercially and financially; whereas it needs to be stressed that the extent of those effects in the region will depend on the duration and magnitude of the debt crisis in Europe, and this could affect the process of economic recovery in Latin America,
 - D. whereas, despite the circumstances in which the crisis hit Latin America, its countries were better equipped to tackle it than at previous moments of economic difficulty, thanks to a period marked by dynamic raw materials exports; whereas the crisis has led to a sharp fall in external demand for goods and services, a reduction in capital flows and less being sent in remittances from workers abroad,
 - E. whereas the creation of comprehensive public social security systems, granting universal access and cover and forming part of a broad spectrum of public policy, and access to employment would facilitate the economic and social development of both regions,
 - F. whereas the EPSCO Employment Report for 2008-2009 reflects an imbalance in terms of gender equality on the labour market affecting also indigenous peoples in Latin America, with marked imbalances in their respective pay levels, women’s wages being on average 17.4% less than men’s, despite a significant increase in the percentage of women on the labour market, rising to over 53% in 2008,
 - G. whereas it is necessary to adopt measures to enhance democratic values in a number of

areas at institutional level, in particular measures of an economic and social nature, including legislative measures and institutional reforms, with a view to guaranteeing recognition for unpaid work and its contribution to the wellbeing of families and the economic growth of nations as a whole,

- H. whereas it is predicted that by 2050 the proportion of young people in the EU will have fallen to 9.7%, whereas that of the over-65s will have risen to 29.9%,
- I. whereas according to CEPAL's forecasts a slower rhythm of growth in Latin America will lead to job losses in the formal sector and push more workers into the informal sector without welfare benefits, thanks to a fall in employers' workforce requirements,
- J. whereas the proportion of employees in the informal sector in Latin America is currently 52%, of whom 33% live in poverty, while in the formal sector 15% of employees may be considered poor,
- K. whereas in the case of men and women in Latin America of the same age and educational level, the income gap is 17%, with the smallest gap occurring in the case of young graduates, while by contrast the biggest gap is that affecting low-paid workers who have not finished secondary school and live in rural areas; whereas the employment of women visibly contributes to gender equality and women's independence,
- L. whereas both women and young people can be a major company asset in terms of not only manpower but also growth potential,
- M. whereas in Latin America and the Caribbean 20% of young people neither study nor work and are thus denied access to both education and employment,
- N. whereas the population of Latin America and the Caribbean is mainly young, multicultural and multilingual, being of indigenous origin, African descent or mixed race and made up of various ethnic groups,
- O. whereas members of indigenous peoples and persons of African descent in Latin America earn, on average, 28% less than those of white origin, the biggest gap, i.e. that between the two ends of the wage spectrum, being between young white city-dwellers and older workers and those living in rural areas,
- P. whereas Europe will continue to be marked by a sectoral shift in employment from agriculture, industry and processing to services; whereas by 2020 the service sector will employ three-quarters of the active working population,
- Q. whereas in Europe 23% of women are not part of the labour market, while the figures for part-time female employment are four times those for men, the main reason being women's home and family responsibilities,
- R. whereas women's progressive integration into the labour market has not led to any significant increase in the numbers of women managers,
- S. whereas, despite the fact that the unemployment rate among those aged between 25 and 29 is similar to that for other age groups, only half of Europeans aged under 29 are in secure

and decent jobs with rights,

- T. whereas governments in both Europe and Latin America need to ensure that public job creation policy pays particular attention to the integration of women and young people, on the basis of a suitable legal framework backed up by fiscal, industrial, commercial and other policies, together with active employment policies,
- U. whereas it is essential to correct the imbalance between supply and demand on the labour market arising from underskilling of the labour force, thanks to which many vacancies are left unfilled in Europe; whereas action on this will raise the number of posts that need to be filled in the EU (for 2006 to 2020) by a billion,
- V. whereas it is vital to integrate the young into the labour market, recalling that they can bring our regions the skills they need in terms of research, innovation and self-employment opportunities, thus contributing to the objectives of growth and sustainable development,
- W. whereas the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy include achieving, by 2020, a 75% employment rate for men and women aged between 20 and 64, on a basis of growth that is intelligent, sustainable, long-term and inclusive and is grounded in the principles of ‘flexicurity’¹ and lifelong learning, as well as reducing the school drop-out rate to 10% and ensuring that 40% of those aged between 30 and 34 have a higher education qualification,
- X. whereas a sound education is a fundamental, universal and inalienable human right, which must therefore be protected and guaranteed by all countries for the entire population without discrimination,
- Y. whereas education and training form, alongside employment, the mainstay of the fight against poverty and social exclusion, and are also the key condition for balancing supply and demand in a context of jobs that offer both security and quality, and whereas it is consequently important to ensure that girls enjoy genuinely equal opportunities in terms of access to education and to training courses leading to qualifications,
- Z. whereas it is vital to develop an all inclusive approach to new information and communication technologies that includes investment in infrastructure to enable universal access to the internet, and in tandem to introduce educational content and policies targeting the adult population which help to bridge the digital divide; whereas similarly vital are measures aimed at incorporating this factor as a means of promoting competitiveness and the internationalisation of trade and processes so that new technologies also help strengthen and enhance democracy by facilitating transparency and participation, especially for groups that experience the greatest difficulties in participating in public affairs, such as young people, women, minorities and original peoples,
- AA. whereas measures to contribute to a fairer distribution of income and wealth by means of suitable public policies to create fairer and more equitable societies must be a goal which should be reflected in all processes of cooperation between countries, including the LAC-EU relationship,

¹ *Flexicurity*: a recently coined term referring to an instrument aimed at creating quality jobs and designed to reconcile flexibility and security on the labour market.

AB. whereas migration between both regions is of great significance, making a major contribution to the economies of both,

AC. whereas structural coercion, a form of discrimination against women, preventing them from achieving equality and parity in the context of economic, labour, political, social, family and cultural relations and from being independent and participating fully in the decision-making process, is to be rejected,

1. Believes that the present economic and financial crisis should be viewed as an opportunity to create an innovative economy with high skills levels and low carbon emissions and capable of generating new decent and stable jobs that take account of the principles of gender equality, as well as the need to achieve a fair work-life balance and promote the employment of young people, strengthening the commitment to increasing education budgets given by our countries so as to ensure high quality apprenticeships and create better paid jobs and that meet international standards for the protection of workers;
2. Considers that, given that social inclusion and combating poverty are part of the EU's job creation objectives, the EU and LAC governments should recognise social inclusion as a universal right to which all their inhabitants are entitled;
3. Calls on the governments to ensure that their development programmes include job creation and active employment policies as a priority, and for those programmes to adopt a perspective that is not merely electoral or crisis-driven;
4. Recommends that the parliaments coordinate their actions and share good practices in order to enhance and progress legislation aimed at generating quality employment for women and young people;
5. Recommends that public policies designed to integrate women and young people into the labour market should be backed up by a suitable legal framework to ensure permanence and protect their social rights, as well as by fiscal, industrial and commercial policies that can sustain those policies and guarantee their viability;
6. Recognises the significant contribution made to the economy by rural and urban women in their production and reproductive roles, in developing a range of strategies to combat poverty, and in preserving the knowledge and practices essential to sustaining life, with particular reference to food security and health;
7. Stresses the need for closer coordination and consistency between economic and trade policies and social policies, particularly those aimed at job creation, so as to ensure that economic measures designed to overcome the crisis and the requirements of the labour markets do not jeopardise the acquired social and employment rights of workers and with measures enabling workers to adapt to future labour market needs, taking account of the ongoing migration of the labour force from the primary sector and industry to other areas of activity, especially the services sector;
8. With this in view, recommends that 'teleworking' be encouraged and expanded as a genuine instrument to maintain and generate all forms of employment through the use of information and communications technologies, together with the necessary legal

regulation;

9. Recommends that policies and programmes be drawn up for quality employment and social security, together with economic incentives aimed at ensuring that women without own resources can find decent paid employment on equal terms with men so as to maintain their independence and full enjoyment of their rights;
10. Draws attention to the need to draw up and implement public policies to give wider sustainable access for women to land ownership, water and other natural and productive resources, to sanitation and other services, and to finance and technology, as well as for policies to encourage men and women to share family responsibilities and acknowledge the importance of domestic work, particularly by guaranteeing that employment rights and conditions and rights for domestic work are made the same as for other paid work, in accordance with international standards; similarly recommends that state policies be implemented to enable the participation, under equal conditions, of indigenous women and women of African descent in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres;
11. Calls for greater efforts to be made to eradicate all forms of child exploitation and child labour;
12. Recommends a clear option in favour of the emerging sectors, especially in the context of innovation and environment-friendly, low-carbon economic solutions; would like to see technology transfers enabling those Latin American countries that export raw materials to add value to their natural resources;
13. Stresses the major role that can be played by legal migrants in the labour markets of the host countries; believes in this connection that workers must be able to seek work abroad without losing the labour and social rights acquired in their home countries;
14. Welcomes the objective set in the Europe 2020 strategy in the context of employment of combating all types of discrimination, achieving inclusive growth by removing the obstacles to labour market access affecting women, younger people, older people and legal immigrants and enabling workers to acquire relevant skills; recommends to ensure close collaboration between all related policy areas, in particular education, youth, social affairs, employment, research and innovation, with a view to exploring the possibility of common objectives;
15. Welcomes the conclusions of the Mar de Plata Action Programme designed to introduce cooperation mechanisms to allow for the exchange of ideas and experience, and the dissemination of good practice with regard to policies on employment, training, vocational training, education and social inclusion;
16. Believes that job creation policies need to be backed up with concrete measures, including reducing indirect wage costs, sandwich courses, more efficient public services, improved lifelong learning opportunities, more competitive and effective education systems, a closer fit between skills and labour market needs, and incentives for the creation of SMEs;
17. Emphasises that one of the principles which future labour markets will have to observe is the need for a suitable work-life balance; urges the governments, therefore, to take the measures needed to achieve the objective of a nursery place for 90% of children aged

between three and compulsory school age and 33% of children under three;

18. Believes that universal access to complete healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health, can help to increase participation by women in political life and paid work, and thus in decision making positions, with priority being given to young women, the poorest, indigenous women, women of African descent, rural women and women with disabilities; calls on governments to establish programmes to promote health at workplace, with particular emphasis on reproductive health, by improving hygiene and safety at work;
19. Calls for a firm commitment to the social economy, recalling its potential for generating economic activity thanks to interpersonal cooperation, the implementation of joint projects, and a participatory model of organisation in which capital is an instrument and wage solidarity is practised;
20. Notes the persistent violence which women in some parts of Latin America suffer when returning home from work; urges governments to devise strategies to ensure the safety of women on those journeys, especially in major risk areas, such as border areas, where there is no surveillance or protection; also condemns the unacceptable scourge of ‘femicides’;
21. Proposes, with the aim of encouraging women’s employment, the recognition of the social and economic value of women’s unpaid domestic work and the adoption of additional measures, such as more facilities for the care of dependent persons, flexible childcare allowances, greater protection against redundancy for women on maternity leave, and the introduction or greater take-up of paternity leave;
22. Calls on governments to develop policies to support and assist the most vulnerable groups, such as one parent families, in particular young mothers, and specific strategies to help integrate persons with disabilities, and particularly young people and women, to enter the labour market;
23. Believes that one of the key measures which can contribute to reducing poverty among women and indigenous peoples and different ethnic groups is the promotion of a flexible micro-credit system, with low interest rates and no deposit required, which can enable its beneficiaries to work on a self-employed basis;
24. Calls also for active policies to protect women from sexual harassment at the workplace; calls also on the governments to introduce programmes to combat occupational risks and encourage health at the workplace, with particular emphasis on reproductive health, by improving hygiene and safety at work;
25. Considers that the measures adopted on gender equality should include promoting women’s employment, combating all forms of discrimination including wage discrimination, fighting gender stereotypes, and encouraging women’s equal participation in political life and in management positions, in other words, achieving equality as regards the exercise of power and decision-making;
26. Points out that the contribution to reducing poverty made by the work of women and young people is undeniable, as are its beneficial effects in terms of development;
27. Recommends the adoption of policies for reducing the gender wage gap, while not

neglecting that between indigenous peoples and the rest of the population; believes this objective can be achieved by substantially increasing raising ethnic minorities' educational levels;

28. Calls on the governments to fight segregation at work, remove the obstacles to access by women, indigenous peoples and different ethnic groups to certain jobs and sectors, and adopt measures for their participation in occupations where they are currently under-represented;
29. Supports 'flexicurity', as an instrument tending to contribute to the creation of quality jobs and designed to reconcile flexibility and security on the labour market; believes it can facilitate entry into and movement within the labour market, to the benefit of both employers and workers;
30. Recommends that the governments take the measures needed to achieve a major fall in school drop-out rates, with this requiring that greater provision be made for alternative education, in which new technologies play a more important role, to ensure continuity in integrating children, adolescents, young people and adults who have had to leave school and whose right to an education has been restricted; similarly considers that access to the internet and to new technologies for all sections of society and all age groups would promote labour market entry;
31. Stresses the importance of creating and/or supporting national youth organisations by means of a suitable legal framework and the provision of manpower, funding and materials, enabling them to develop policies and programmes designed to meet the needs of young people in the Member States;
32. Advocates the adoption of mechanisms to help young people find their first job, together with educational programmes facilitating their adaptation to labour market needs; other measures in favour of youth employment could include providing more information on the labour market, closer dialogue between employers and educational institutions, and universal access to secondary school;
33. Calls for promotion and full implementation of integrated lifelong learning strategies, for the acquisition of the key competences that every individual, in particular those with a disadvantaged background, needs for success in a knowledge-driven society, for increased participation in tertiary or equivalent education and finally for promotion of the benefits of learning mobility in terms of increasing knowledge, skills and experience;
34. Recommends that the governments continue their efforts to provide more and better state education, with a view to the preservation of a social balance grounded in equality and democracy and the resultant improved job opportunities;
35. Stresses the need for efforts to be made to ensure access to education on a universal and free basis and to open up schooling to pupils from least-favoured backgrounds; recognises the crucial role of educators and believes that the teaching profession must be promoted and encouraged by strengthening initial and continuous training and protecting working conditions, while setting salaries commensurate with the responsibilities and dignity of educators' work.

36. Stresses that educational measures must be oriented towards acquiring the skills needed to create a knowledge economy;
 37. Advocates improving training systems, raising standards and enhancing the quality thereof, by identifying and using successful experiences creating bridges between employers' needs and workers' skills, offering career guidance and motivation and improving workers' quality of life; believes systems should identify the skilled personnel employers require and inform people how they can acquire the necessary skills, certification and registration;
 38. Considers it necessary, given the changing world in which we live and to which we must adapt, to promote life-long training policies so as to develop and update knowledge and skills, thereby ensuring that all workers, whether or not in work, are properly qualified for decent jobs;
 39. Calls on the governments to adopt measures in favour of SMEs, given their traditional role as motors of job creation, with a view to stimulating employment in the formal sector and limiting the numbers employed in the informal sector; calls for the development of indicators for monitoring and assessing the quality and sustainability of the jobs created;
 40. Calls on the governments, furthermore, to adopt short- and medium-term measures in support of the primary sector and in indigenous regions of Latin America, with a view to consolidating local economies and protecting the least-favoured farmers; believes that these measures should include greater investment in the sector, in all productive cycles, infrastructures, technical assistance, financing of services and training aimed at promoting the quality and competitiveness of the products and of the sector as a whole;
 41. Favours enhancing regional development in indigenous areas of LAC countries with a proposal boosting the local economies and improving their inhabitants' quality of life, respecting all their rights and customs in accordance with ILO Convention 169;
 42. Calls for the future agreements concluded by the EU with the countries and regions of Latin America to include, on a systematic basis, a clause making direct reference to the promotion of young people's employment and to ensuring women's integration into and participation in the labour market, seeking to eliminate any form of discrimination based on gender, age or ethnicity;
 43. Welcomes very warmly the recent creation of the EU-LAC Foundation in Hamburg (Germany), which will address employment and gender issues also and accordingly help to end professional and sectoral segregation on the labour market by raising awareness and through education;
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44. Instructs its Co-Presidents to forward this resolution to the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the Parliaments of the EU Member States and of all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Latin American Parliament, the Central American Parliament, the Andean Parliament, the Mercosur Parliament, the Secretariat of the Andean Community, the Mercosur Committee of Permanent Representatives, and the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American Economic System.