

24 November 2011

MEETING NORWEGIAN EMPLOYMENT MINISTER HANNE BJURSTRØM

KEY MESSAGES 

- 1 Reducing unemployment requires action to boost job creation, encourage youth employment, developing skills and reforming tax and benefit systems
- 2 Better administrative cooperation between Member States is needed to solve the problems related to posting of workers

WHAT DOES BUSINESSEUROPE AIM FOR? **Employment**

- The situation on Europe's labour markets is again deteriorating. The EU unemployment rate stands at 9.7 % or 23 million people. One in five young people do not have a job. Long-term unemployment accounts for 43% of total unemployment. The crisis has exposed underlying structural labour market weaknesses such as rigid labour law, skills mismatches, inadequate activation policies etc.
- Four priorities for action reforms should be:
 - job creation
 - youth employment
 - skills development
 - reforms in tax and benefit systems
- Achieving the 75% employment rate by 2020 means that companies will have to create 17.6 million jobs. This is a daunting challenge. New regulatory initiatives should always be subject to a competitiveness check. And if it shows that a proposal would negatively impact on growth and jobs, it should be abandoned.
- Young people need better competencies and prospects to enter the labour market. More apprenticeships, for example through dual learning, can contribute to give the young people the qualifications demanded by companies and provide the first so essential job experience.



Posting of Workers

- The Commission will publish a proposal on posting of workers as well as EU legislation “clarifying the exercise of the freedom of establishment and the freedom to provide services alongside fundamental social rights” (“Monti II)
- Posting is a limited phenomenon in the EU. The demand for posting is mostly driven by labour and/or skills shortages in the host market. Companies that are posting their workers abroad see in it a means to enter new markets while relying on their experienced workers. The ECJ cases do not require a comprehensive revision of the posting directive; rather, what is needed is the following:
 - At national level
 1. Ensure that the directive is correctly implemented at national level
 2. Remedy situations in case applicable rules are not observed
 - At European level
 3. Improve administrative cooperation between the Member States: Access to information on the terms of employment that must be observed is the best way to ensure compliance with the directive
- A Monti II regulation can be helpful if it aims, like in 1998, to set a procedure enabling the Commission and the Member State in question to remove unjustified obstacles to the freedom to provide services where they occur. The Monti II regulation should recognise that obstacles to the freedom to provide services which derive from a disproportionate use of the right to take collective action by trade unions are forbidden under EU law.