

# CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF EUROPE

## **Recommendation 62 (1999)<sup>1</sup> on local authorities and employability**

*(Extract from the Official Gazette of the Council of Europe  
– June 1999)*

The Congress,

Bearing in mind the proposal of the Chamber of Local  
Authorities,

1. Welcoming the preliminary report on Local Authorities and Employability prepared by Sir John Harman, on behalf of its Working Group “Policies for the Town”;
2. Recording its gratitude to a number of member countries which have provided material for the report and expresses its hope that additional countries will provide appropriate material, both for a possible further report to be produced in the year 2000 and for the associated CLRAE seminar on the subject;
3. Recalling the report and accompanying Recommendation prepared in 1998 by the Chamber of Regions on “Regions and Employment” and the Opinion thereon of the Chamber of Local Authorities prepared by Mr Bugeon – where both texts stressed the fundamental role of local and regional authorities in assisting employment programmes;
4. Noting, however, that the reports concentrated more on the provision of jobs by relevant administrations rather than the development of skills of persons to increase their chances of finding a job;
5. Believing that new approaches to unemployment are needed because of changing requirements in the job market;
6. Considering that the policies involved in creating employment potential involve many different areas of policy making;
7. Welcome, in this respect, European Union initiatives for the promotion of territorial employment pacts which provide for an initial diagnosis of each territory in terms of potential needs; and aim at involving all relevant local partners to produce a coherent employment policy;
8. Recalling the European Urban Charter which states that “the opportunity for employment is the right of every

person of working age in the community, in order that they can participate through their own endeavours in the fruits of what the urban area has to offer”;

9. Believing that one of the most important tasks of local government is to encourage economic development generally and that in this context the provision of employment, particularly for young people starting out on occupational activities, is one of the most important challenges facing public authorities in Europe;

10. Considering that equally important is getting into work other categories of unemployed, eg., older persons, disabled people, single parents, the long term unemployed and getting persons off unemployment benefit back into work (“welfare-to-work”);

11. Believing that, while the main determinant of unemployment is the demand for labour in the economy, lack of important skills including readiness for work results in a situation where the economy delivers fewer jobs than it should, as shown by the fact that in several European economies high demand for labour can coexist with significant levels of unemployment;

12. Convinced therefore that the correct approach is one which aims to increase the employability of persons, especially young people, and to improve their chances of staying in work and progressing in it;

13. That accordingly there is a major requirement for education, training and work preparation backed by substantial financial resources for the unemployed in order to balance supply and demand;

14. Believing that the success of such an approach depends upon full involvement of communities pulling together and finding local people to develop local solutions to local problems;

15. Recognising that many local authorities can easily identify work which needs doing for the general benefit of their communities and that employment policy should enable them to match this work with people who need work and training;

16. Considers that such a local strategy implies the involvement of a range of partners, with prior consultation, particularly with prospective employers; and that a great deal of publicity should be given to these schemes;

17. *Accordingly recommends to relevant national authorities that:*

18. Local authorities should be consulted on national programmes for employment and sit on the relevant national bodies;

19. Local partnerships for employability be established, bringing together all relevant local partners in the concept, strategic and delivery levels, in order to ensure that the skills, experience and enthusiasm of a range of local partners are brought to bear in order to ensure that the schemes are workable and offer a wide range of genuine job prospects;

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1. Debated and approved by the Chamber of Local Authorities on 15 June 1999 and adopted by the Standing Committee on 17 June 1999, (see document CPL (6) 2, draft Recommendation, presented by Sir John Harman, Rapporteur).

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20. Such partnerships, where appropriate, should have the form of a statutory legal body, such as Job Market Centres or Regional Employment Centres, with a highly qualified personnel ;
21. The priority target group for employability schemes should be certain age groups eg., 18-24 years old and for those who have been on unemployment benefit for six months ;
22. Such schemes should involve a period of concentrated professional help designed to identify individual needs, ambitions and options with a view to the elaboration of an action plan which promotes the finding and applying for vacancies for those already possessing skills ; and for those without, includes extra training and careers advice ;
23. They should also result in genuine employment possibilities, in the form, for example of subsidised or unsubsidised work ; work with specialised agencies of benefit to the community ; eg., on environmental improvement ; remunerated work in the voluntary sector ; full time education or training ; financial encouragement for self-employment ;
24. It is accepted that such schemes require substantial public investment and should make it clear that along with the rights and benefits which they offer to individuals goes personal responsibility to engage in employment and to contribute to society ;
25. Recognition of this may be expressed by applying benefit sanctions to people who refuse opportunities or by other means, but employability schemes which do not require real individual commitment are unlikely to succeed ;
26. Local authorities in particular are recognised as having a key role in such schemes, not only through their position as major employers but also, for example, through
- a. ensuring that schemes are integrated with other initiatives intended to address social and economic issues ;
  - b. ensuring that such schemes reflect local needs, particularly those of the most alienated and disenfranchised groups of people ;
  - c. undertaking surveys of employers to assess the need for particular skills (a skill audit) ;
  - d. through acting as agents for coordinating the elements of such schemes ; and
  - e. for promoting an exchange of good practice between authorities ;
27. The progress of such employability schemes is regularly monitored so as to ensure its adaptation to changing needs and circumstances and that its management is done in a professional, efficient and cost-effective manner ;
28. Appropriate financial mechanisms be developed in order to pay for such schemes ;
29. Recognise that such schemes not only provide a response to a major economic challenge and moral imperative but also assist in reducing social exclusion and provide a wide range of benefits for local communities,
30. *Asks the Committee of Ministers to :*
31. Encourage the development in member countries of local partnerships for employability, along the lines set out in the current Recommendation ;
32. Ask the European Committee for Social Cohesion to undertake a survey of current and likely future programmes in member countries.