


Title	Employment in Europe 2008
Author	Matteo Governatori, Magdalena Grzegorzewska, Christoph Maier, João Medeiros, Eric Meyermans and Paul Minty
Source	Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities
Pub Date	2008
Abstract	<div data-bbox="405 414 1323 674" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Now in its 20th edition, the annual <i>Employment in Europe</i> report has become an indispensable aid for analysis that supports the European Commission and the Member States in their joint efforts to develop and implement effective policies in the field of employment under the Lisbon strategy.</p> <p>This year's report comes in the midst of very uncertain times for the European – and indeed the global – economy. Following several years of sound economic growth and generally very strong employment expansion, the European Union now faces a significant risk of a cyclical downturn for the first time since the Lisbon strategy was relaunched. A major test undoubtedly lies ahead.</p> <p>In recent years, the Member States and the Commission have together made significant efforts to implement far-reaching employment reforms and improve the performance of European labour markets. I believe that these coordinated reforms put our labour markets in a better position than a few years ago to deal with the adverse employment impact of an economic downturn.</p> <p>In these uncertain times we must not lose sight of our overall long-term aim of creating more and better jobs. As this report shows, promoting job quality can rhyme with job creation and productivity. Short-term measures may be needed in many Member States if they are to respond to the immediate economic and social needs arising for their citizens out of the current crisis. Such measures should, however, be consistent with our ongoing efforts to prepare the EU labour markets structurally for the challenges of the 21st century.</p> <p>One of the most important of these challenges is the demographic outlook, which suggests a gradually declining supply of labour in Europe. Immigration has been a major source of economic and employment expansion in the Member States over the past few years. Although it cannot provide the sole – or even the main – response to the demographic challenge, it is likely to continue to contribute significantly to solving future labour shortages. Realising this potential will call for additional policy efforts.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the main response to the demographic challenge must come from better use of our internal resources. In particular, improving our understanding of trends in skills requirements will be crucial to designing effective policies for better job matching. Similarly, facilitating geographical mobility within the Union can contribute to making more effective use of the existing labour force, as the largely positive experience with recent enlargements demonstrates. This year's <i>Employment in Europe</i> report covers all these issues and illustrates the added value of a coordinated approach at EU level and the benefit for the Member States of sharing experience and learning from each other's successes.</p> <div data-bbox="948 1464 1246 1630" data-label="Text">  <p>Vladimír Špidla Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities</p> </div>