



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 2 July 2014

Employment: Commission outlines measures to maximise job opportunities in the green economy

The European Commission has today adopted a Communication outlining the employment challenges and opportunities of the current transition towards a green, low carbon, energy and resource-efficient economy. The Green Employment Initiative Communication presents an integrated framework to allow labour market and skill policies to play an active role to support this transition. The Communication focuses on the importance of anticipating and establishing adequate skills policies to support workers in coping with structural change, of securing labour market transitions, and of strengthening governance and partnership-based initiatives. This Communication complements Communications on the Circular Economy and on a Green Action Plan for SMEs (see [IP/14/763](#) and [IP/14/766](#)).



European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion László Andor said: "The structural shift towards a green and resource-efficient economy is already bringing about fundamental changes across all sectors. It is an opportunity to generate high quality environmentally-friendly jobs, while securing the sustainable well-being of future generations and contributing to recovery from the economic crisis. If we implement the right policies, the green economy will play a critical role to increase European global competitiveness and support the Europe 2020 Strategy objectives".

Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik said: *"The shift to a green and resource efficient economy is above all an opportunity to increase European global competitiveness and create sustainable and high quality jobs. The Green Employment initiative will help ensure that environmental and employment policies converge and play an active role in supporting this process."*

European Climate Commissioner Connie Hedegaard said: *"Green jobs are among the fastest growing and the most resilient of the European economy. Instead of being outsourced, local skills are being sought in sectors like energy efficiency of buildings, pipe insulation, recycling and innovative renewable technologies. In these areas employment has grown even during the crisis. In a Europe with 26 million unemployed Europeans it is not enough to create growth. We must also expand in areas that can generate jobs. The green sector offers enormous potential for job creation and we have to make sure Europe can harvest its benefits in full."*

Better targeting of labour market policies and tools, and closer coordination with environment, climate and energy policies, are essential to exploit the full employment potential of "green sectors". This process also brings important challenges, as the economic transformation leads not only to jobs being created, but also to others being redefined.

The Communication sets out an integrated framework for employment and labour market policies at EU and national levels, including:

- bridging skills and knowledge gaps by fostering the development of appropriate skills and better forecasting skills needs
- anticipating sectoral changes, securing transitions in employment and promoting mobility e.g. by promoting wide application of the [European Quality Framework for anticipation of change and restructuring](#) and working closely with public employment services
- supporting job creation through shifting taxation away from labour and on to pollution, promoting green public procurement, entrepreneurship and social enterprises
- increasing transparency and data quality to improve monitoring and analysis of labour market impacts of the green economy in the European Semester
- promoting dialogue between employer representatives and trade unions on the transition to the green economy
- strengthening international cooperation notably through the [Green Growth Knowledge Forum](#) launched by the Green Growth Institute, the OECD, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Bank.

Background

The [Europe 2020 Strategy](#) identifies the transition towards a green, low carbon and resource-efficient economy as one of the key ongoing structural transformations to achieve smart, inclusive and sustainable growth. The model for green growth is based on a structural economic change mainly driven by scarcity of resources (resource constraints and prices), and supported by public policies, technological change and innovation, new markets and changes in industrial and consumer demand patterns.

The [2014 Annual Growth Survey](#) stressed the job creation potential of the green economy and the need to develop strategic frameworks in which labour market and skills policies play an active role in supporting job creation. But integrated policy frameworks linking green growth and employment exist in only a few Member States.

The job creation potential linked to production of energy from renewable sources, energy efficiency, waste and water management, air quality, restoring and preserving biodiversity and developing green infrastructure is both significant and resilient to the business cycle changes. There has been considerable creation of "green jobs" even during the economic crisis, increasing from 3 to 4.2 million in the EU between 2002 and 2011, and by 20% during the recession years (2007-2011).

The Green Employment Initiative Communication builds on the staff working document on "[Exploiting the employment potential of green growth](#)" that was part of the [April 2012 Employment Package](#) (see [IP/12/380](#), [MEMO/12/252](#)), which highlighted that up to 20 million jobs could be created between now and 2020 in the green economy. The Employment Package identified health care and information and communications technologies as the two other main areas of significant potential job creation.

For more information

See [MEMO/14/446](#)

[News item on DG Employment website](#)

[László Andor's website](#)

[Follow László Andor on Twitter](#)

Subscribe to the European Commission's free e-mail [newsletter on employment, social affairs and inclusion](#)

Contacts :

[Jonathan Todd](#) (+32 2 299 41 07)

[Cécile Dubois](#) (+32 2 295 18 83)

For the public: **Europe Direct** by phone **00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11** or by [e-mail](#)