

Foreword / Table of Contents

This „Guide to Territorial Employment Pacts in Austria“ has been elaborated to facilitate the preparation and implementation of an employment agreement and is aligned to the guidelines for territorial employment pacts as provided by the European Commission in 1996. Supplementary statements presented in the guidelines for territorial employment pacts of the European Commission for the period 2000-2006 (published in November 1999) are also reflected in this paper.

The essential, fundamental ideas of a territorial employment pact are described in this paper by listing the criteria of employment agreements, defining quality characteristics, and explaining a possible organisational structure. And this guideline is furthermore supplemented by a time table of activities planned and results expected with a view to facilitating an in-depth approach.

Because of the different situation as encountered on the labour markets in the individual regions this paper does not deal with the pact contents; the latter are entirely autonomously defined in the respective employment pacts as the strong and weak points are best known in the regions concerned.

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Elaboration of employment pacts in Austria

Austria welcomes the European strategy for the promotion of local development and employment initiatives. Facilitating local initiatives is considered an important step towards improving employment conditions in Austria.

At the end of 1996 the European Commission launched an invitation to submit projects within the framework of the „Territorial Employment Pact“ (TEP) programme. Four Austrian initiatives were acknowledged as employment pacts qualifying for this programme in 1997, and the implementation of employment agreements has been further developed since. Salzburg, Tyrol, Vorarlberg and Vienna – among

altogether 89 employment pacts in member states of the European Union - received financial aid from the European Commission from 1997-1999. In addition, the above candidates (with the exception of Vorarlberg) received financial means within the framework of target 3 in 1999.

Austria is among the few countries in the EU to push ahead employment agreements in the framework of NAP, the national action plan for employment. The territorial employment pacts provide an essential instrument for the implementation of the targets as envisaged in the NAP. The former Federal Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Affairs approached the

federal provinces (or Länder) and AMS (Arbeitsmarktservice – Labour market service) for the conclusion of frame agreements. All of the Länder welcomed this initiative and are currently engaged in the setting up and implementation of employment pacts. By the end of 1999 further TEPs had been established in the federal provinces of Carinthia, Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Tyrol, and Vienna. In the Burgenland and in Styria the setting up is under way.

Characteristics of employment pacts

A common feature of all territorial employment pacts is the inclusion of employment questions as central topic in all measures. They are designed to be sector-crossing and global and require the explicit approval of the entire concept and the individual steps on the part of all partners. Project decisions are desired to be made according to the bottom-up-principle as far as possible. Territorial employment pacts are always partner-oriented and should represent an innovative element for the respective area concerned.

The territorial employment pacts are expected to provide selective links between the existing offer-related measures of AMS and demand impulses of regional economic and structure promotion. The demand areas in both private economy and society such as improved living conditions and a better environment, etc. are to provide comprehensive direct

and indirect employment effects. The care for predefined target groups is to be significantly upgraded by an agreed-upon action plan (catchwords: child-care, disabled persons, recipients of social assistance).

An unrenounceable precondition for the success of a pact is the development of a common objective adopted by all actors. Firm connections must be agreed among all parties involved: all actors must be actively included into both planning and implementation.

Of at least equal importance is the limitation of competence and responsibility. The co-operation of different bodies and actors with often entirely different tasks and possibilities must focus on one common

product – while the basis therefore has to be full awareness of the individual sphere of responsibility.

Territorial employment pacts must always be developed by paying attention to the economic, employment-political and social conditions of a respective region, but also institutional and political traditions. The possible inclusion of NGOs should be considered to ensure even better quality.

