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*Plenary sitting*

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10.12.2014

B8-0355/2014

## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 123(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation of the steel sector in the EU: protecting workers and industries  
(2014/2976(RSP))

**Laura Agea, Dario Tamburrano, Rosa D'Amato, Eleonora Evi,  
Piernicola Pedicini**  
on behalf of the EFDD Group

**B8-0355/2014**

**European Parliament resolution on the situation of the steel sector in the EU: protecting workers and industries (2014/2976(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which has its roots in the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community,
- having regard to Articles 173, 174 and 153 of the TFEU,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and to the Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers,
- having regard to the Europe 2020 strategy,
- having regard to Article 191(2) of the TFEU,
- having regard to Directive 2008/1/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 January 2008 concerning integrated pollution prevention and control<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to Directive 2010/75/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 November 2010 on industrial emissions (integrated pollution prevention and control)<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to Article 8 of Directive 2004/35/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 on environmental liability with regard to the prevention and remedying of environmental damage<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission’s steel action plan adopted in June 2013 and the creation of the Commission’s High-Level Expert Group on Steel,
- having regard to its previous resolutions on the steel industry and the restructuring, transfer and closure of companies in the EU,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 10 October 2012 entitled ‘A Stronger European Industry for Growth and Economic Recovery’ (COM(2012)0582),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 2 February 2011 entitled ‘Tackling the challenges in commodity markets and on raw materials’ (COM (2011)0025),
- having regard to the Commission statement and the subsequent debate in plenary on the ‘EU steel sector in the EU: protecting workers and industries’, held on 26 November

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 24, 29.1.2008, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 334, 17.12.2010, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 143, 30.4.2004, p. 56.

2014,

- having regard to its resolution of 13 December 2012 on the EU steel industry<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to the 2030 Climate and Energy Package adopted on 22 January 2014,
  - having regard to the EUR 300 billion investment plan for the next three years announced in July 2014 by Commission President Juncker,
  - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the European steel industry is a world leader in its sector with a turnover of about EUR 190 billion and direct employment of about 360 000 highly skilled people and several more in its whole value chain, producing 178 million tonnes of steel per year at more than 500 steel production sites in 23 Member States;
- B. whereas steel is one of the world's most widely traded industrial materials, with annual global production of about 1 500 million tonnes;
- C. whereas the steel industry is of strategic importance to the EU economy and whereas it is in the interest of the EU as a whole to preserve the activities that make up its industrial fabric and to ensure security of supply through domestic production;
- D. whereas a competitive European steel industry forms the backbone of development and value creation for many major industrial sectors, such as the automotive, construction and mechanical engineering sectors;
- E. whereas Europe's steel industry is under threat from lower demand, higher costs for energy and raw materials, and increased competition from countries outside the EU;
- F. whereas the current crisis is creating enormous social hardship for the workers and regions affected and whereas those companies involved in restructuring should act in a socially responsible manner, as there cannot be successful restructuring without sufficient social dialogue;
- G. whereas at present electricity prices in Europe are double those of the United States, and three times higher than in China;
- H. whereas the Commission's steel action plan adopted in June 2013, which made key recommendations to Member States to help address issues in the sector, has not produced the expected results;
- I. whereas EU policies have led to a de-industrialisation of the EU;
- J. whereas the EU steel industry is exposed to strong global competition, which benefits from lower labour and energy costs and more flexible social and environmental rules;
- K. whereas the latest industrial restructuring plan presented by Thyssen Krupp to the

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2012)0509.

Italian Government includes around 550 staff layoffs and the closure of a melting furnace, and puts at risk one of the oldest and most advanced steel plants, namely AST (Acciai Speciali Terni);

- L. whereas the ILVA steel plant in Taranto is also causing extreme environmental degradation and damage and serious social, health and economic problems for the local population and for other economic activities;
- M. whereas, in terms of EU industrial policy, it is of vital strategic importance to prevent the further relocation of steel plants and production outside the EU and to ensure the security of the workforce, guaranteeing that EU environmental standards are also applied to imported steel products;
  - 1. Stresses that keeping the steel industry active and competitive is vital to the future of Europe and its citizens; emphasises also the importance of protecting and supporting the skills, expertise and ‘excellence’ of EU steel industry workers, and of providing immediately operational tools and concrete solutions to enable European steel companies to survive and maintain their competitiveness on the world market;
  - 2. Deeply regrets Thyssen Krupp’s latest industrial restructuring plan, which includes around 550 staff layoffs and the closure of a melting furnace; stresses the need to closely monitor the future development of AST and to safeguard employment, maintain sufficient territorial/regional cohesion and strengthen the competitiveness of the EU steel industry; considers it also regrettable that the Commission did not fully monitor the situation experienced by many other European industries, which have suffered from the impact of the crisis and have in many cases been closed or sold to non-European competitors;
  - 3. Considers it important to revise the long-term strategy of the steel industry and urges the Commission to submit policy ideas on how to support the restructuring of the EU steel industry and maintain its competitiveness in a globalised world, ensuring the highest environmental and health protection standards;
  - 4. Notes the importance of reindustrialising the EU in order to enhance quality, long-term investment and sustainable job creation; notes that the steel industry can act as a pillar for the reindustrialisation of Europe, provided that environmental and health standards are upheld;
  - 5. Calls on the Commission to streamline and, if necessary, revise the relevant EU funds, initiatives and policy instruments, and urges, in this connection, that specific attention be devoted to the need to ensure that the relevant skills and excellence of workers are retained and developed;
  - 6. Notes that, as part of a reindustrialisation policy, the Commission should adopt special measures to support EU steel plants that are old or that no longer comply with environmental standards, in order to assist them in the transition towards modernised, advanced, environmentally friendly and low-emission steel production; asks the Member States to consider suspending operations in plants, or in the relevant parts thereof, that represent an immediate danger to workers’ health or threaten to have an

immediate significant adverse effect on the environment;

7. Urges the Commission to revise its competition policy in order to make it compatible with the health and safety of all EU citizens and residents; considers that it should be geared towards addressing global challenges on the basis of a competitive, anti-dumping and environmentally friendly policy that ensures a level playing field at international level; stresses that current competition policies are out of date and do not take account of global competition; recognises, in this connection, the importance of trade defence measures and supports the Commission's attempt to overcome the 'lesser duty rule';
8. Stresses the importance of further mainstreaming competitiveness, in particular industrial competitiveness, across all relevant policy initiatives if the EU wishes to achieve its goal of ensuring that industry's share of GDP is around 20 %;
9. Notes that reconciling the need for high environmental performance with increased global competitiveness and the need to address CO<sub>2</sub> leakage concerns remains a fundamental challenge for the steel sector, taking into account the fact that the EU's competitors are not bound by the same standards and targets;
10. Calls on the Commission to carry out a thorough examination of policy instruments that include the possibility of complementing existing emission control systems with border carbon adjustment measures, in order to ensure a level playing field with non-EU competitors, to further limit carbon leakage and to ensure the competitiveness of exports;
11. Calls for the application of the 'life cycle assessment' approach in order to evaluate environmental impacts and reduced use of resources across all life cycle stages, which include raw material extraction and conversion, followed by manufacture and distribution, through use and/or consumption, in order to foster reuse, recycling of materials and energy recovery and to reduce ultimate disposal;
12. Calls for an urgent reform of the EU approach to applying the 'polluter pays' principle when dealing with greenhouse gas emissions and asks the Commission to put forward a new legislative proposal by 2018 at the latest that will make it possible to abandon the cap and trade system at the end of the third period of the quota exchange, as set out in the Emissions Trading System (ETS) Directive; calls on the Commission, in the meantime, to ensure a level playing field within the EU in the steel sector and asks the Member States to use part of their ETS revenues to finance innovative and low-carbon technology interventions, in particular in energy-intensive sectors, in order to reduce the carbon leakage list;
13. Recalls the importance of a well-functioning scrap market, which should be further enhanced and stimulated in the light of the strategy for an EU circular economy, in order to prevent excessive price increases as a result of the presence of non-EU industries in the EU market; calls on the Commission, in this connection, to consider applying export duties on the EU scrap market in order to prevent the environmental dumping that normally occurs;
14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the

Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee and the other relevant institutions.