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Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

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DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

on the European Semester for economic policy coordination: implementation
of 2012 priorities
(2012/2150(INI))

Rapporteur: Marije Cornelissen

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs calls on the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas in 2010 Member States committed themselves to the EU2020 goals; whereas, however, the EU is not on track to attain these goals within the timeframe, as the combined national targets are too low and the measures taken have not led to significant progress;
 1. Regrets that, despite the Commission's finding that the commitments set out by Member States in their National Reform Programmes (NRPs) are insufficient to meet most of the EU2020 targets, none was urged in the country-specific recommendations to step up its national targets;
 2. Welcomes the Communication 'Towards a job-rich recovery' and its staff working documents; calls on the Commission to make the exploitation of the job-creation potential of the green economy, health and social care and the ICT sector key priorities in the 2013 Annual Growth Survey (AGS);
 3. Deplores the fact that most Member States did not submit a National Job Plan as part of their National Reform Programme 2012;
 4. Welcomes the recommendation aimed at shifting taxes from labour to environmentally harmful activities; calls on Member States to implement this recommendation while ensuring that this will benefit lower incomes in particular;
 5. Reiterates its call on the Commission to elaborate a framework for the social economy as it is an important element of the European social model and the single market;
 6. Regrets that the Council failed to take into account Parliament's call for the focus to be on job quality in its guidance for 2012; calls on the Commission to include job quality, core workers' rights, and support for labour market mobility, self-employment and cross-border mobility by increasing security for workers in transition between jobs in the AGS 2013;
 7. Reiterates its call on Member States to ensure that people with precarious, temporary or part-time contracts or who are self-employed have adequate social protection and access to training, and to implement related framework agreements;
 8. Welcomes the recommendations addressing the low participation of women in the labour market; calls on the Commission to address labour market segregation, unequal distribution of care responsibilities and the effects of fiscal consolidation on women in its policy guidance;

9. Notes that recommendations have been made to several Member States regarding wages; calls on the Commission to ensure that these do not increase in-work poverty or wage inequalities or harm low-income groups;
10. Welcomes the increased focus of the Commission and Council on combating youth unemployment; calls on the Commission to propose a binding European Youth Guarantee without delay; calls on the Council to swiftly decide on the proposals in the Employment Package;
11. Welcomes the recommendation to tackle the social consequences of the crisis in the 2012 guidance and the increased attention to combating poverty in the country-specific recommendations; is gravely concerned, however, about the increasing poverty in the EU;
12. Calls on the Commission and Council to revise the scoreboard for the correction of macro-economic imbalances and strengthen its social and employment dimension;
13. Expresses its concern about the fact that no recommendations have been made on the EU2020 objectives to Member States with a financial assistance programme; calls on the Commission to assess the impact of the economic adjustment programme on the headline targets;
14. Calls on the Council to reach a swift agreement with Parliament and start immediate application of the proposal for the strengthening of surveillance of Member States in serious difficulties, including a social impact assessment and full consistency of the adjustment programmes with the broad economic policy guidelines;
15. Calls on the Commission and Council to involve social partners, NGOs and local authorities in the formulation and implementation of policies in the framework of the European Semester;
16. Calls on the Commission to agree with Parliament on an AGS format that allows Parliament to amend it before its adoption by Council;
17. Calls on the Commission to improve the quality, transparency and democratic accountability of the European Semester by proposing legislation defining the formal requirements on the format and timing of documents to be submitted;
18. Calls on Member States to agree on procedures that allow genuine parliamentary debate and stakeholder involvement at national level.