



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2014 - 2019

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

2014/2238(INI)

7.5.2015

OPINION

of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on the Green Employment Initiative: tapping into the job creation potential of
the green economy
(2014/2238(INI))

Rapporteur: Eleonora Evi

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety calls on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Reiterates the need to move towards a low carbon economy; underlines the fact that the greening of EU economies can contribute to long term, sustainable and inclusive growth;
2. Stresses that two-thirds of the services provided by nature, including fertile land, clean water and air, are in decline, and global warming and biodiversity loss are close to the limits beyond which irreversible impacts on our societies and the natural environment cannot be prevented;
3. Points out that continuous economic growth is possible only if it takes into account the limitations of the environment; highlights, in this context, the fact that a green and circular economy can provide solutions for the environment as well as for the economy and for society in general;
4. Stresses that a comprehensive policy approach is needed in order to respond to these challenges, build sustainable, crisis-resilient European economies and fully tap into the job potential of a green transition of our economies; calls on the Commission and the Member States to adopt ambitious and integrated regulatory, fiscal and financial frameworks to ensure sustainable investment, encourage sustainable innovation and, thereby, fully unlock the employment potential of the green transition;
5. Highlights the fact that full implementation of environmental legislation, as well as the improvement of environmental integration and policy coherence across different sectorial policies in the EU, are essential for a full deployment of the potential linked to the green economy and therefore for the creation of green jobs;
6. Notes that in its 2015 report the European Environment Agency points out that current measures are insufficient to achieve aims related to conserving biodiversity, reducing the use of fossil fuels, and combating climate change and averting its impact on human health and the quality of the environment;
7. Emphasises that a transition towards sustainable societies and economies, including sustainable patterns of consumption and production, generates the potential to create new green jobs, and transform existing employment into green jobs, in almost all sectors and across the entire value chain – from research to production, distribution and servicing – in new green high-tech sectors such as renewable energies as well as in traditional industries such as manufacturing and construction, agriculture and fisheries, and service sectors such as tourism, catering, transport and education; stresses that this job potential provides opportunities for both a highly skilled and a low-skilled workforce;
8. Recognises that the green transition will, on balance, have a positive impact on employment, reflecting the fact that sustainable economic activities, such as energy savings and organic farming, are more labour-intensive than the activities they replace;

9. Notes that the green transition of our economies bears significant potential to create local jobs that cannot be offshored, including in sectors hit by the economic crisis, such as by pursuing energy efficiency in the construction sector;
10. Notes that, according to the European Environment Agency, the green goods and services sector grew by more than 50 % between 2000 and 2011, generating over 1.3 million jobs that have benefited the EU's export balance and its economic competitiveness;
11. Points out that Member States may derogate from the rules governing State aid in order to pursue green policies;
12. Urges the Member States and the private sector to use instruments such as Ecodesign, Ecolabel, EMAS and green public procurement (GPP), as they can support the green economy and thus contribute to the creation of green jobs; calls on the Commission to provide guidance tools to create favourable market condition for the full adoption of these voluntary instruments;
13. Calls on the Member States to focus greater attention on the implementation of environmental management and eco-auditing systems based on the European standard (ISO 14000);
14. Stresses the significant employment potential of the circular economy; highlights the fact that improving resource efficiency could create between 1.4 and 2.8 million jobs in Europe, and that transitioning to an economy based on the durability and reparability of products can create jobs along the whole product lifecycle in the sectors of maintenance, repair, upgrade and reuse; emphasises that waste prevention, ecodesign, reuse and similar measures could bring net savings of EUR 600 billion, or 8 % of annual turnover, for businesses in the EU, while reducing total annual greenhouse gas emissions by 2-4 %;
15. Highlights the fact that implementing existing legislation on waste prevention and management could create more than 400 000 green jobs; recalls that an additional 180 000 green jobs would have been created by the revision of the Waste Directives that regrettably has been withdrawn by the Commission; stresses that implementing energy efficiency and saving measures could create up to 2 million green jobs, and that 3 million more could be created in the renewable energies sector;
16. Calls on the Commission to honour its commitment to submit, before the end of 2015, a new proposal for the revision of EU waste legislation based on a holistic approach that: addresses entire product lifecycles, including waste prevention; setting EU resource efficiency targets that limit resources and energy consumption, and a corresponding lead indicator; and promotes the ecodesign of products in order to facilitate reuse and recycling, taking the full product cycle into account with the aim of ensuring sustainable materials management; stresses the need to keep recycling targets that are at least as ambitious as those of the withdrawn proposal; calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote a market for secondary raw materials after recycling;
17. Notes that more than 14 million jobs in Europe depend directly on ecosystems and biodiversity, including forestry, agriculture and fisheries; emphasises that greening these sectors would increase the number of people in work and foster the resilience of the sectors in order to promote sustainable employment; notes that investing in green

infrastructure provides many social, economic and environmental benefits, including job creation;

18. Calls on the Member States to develop programmes that protect and sustain the environment, to prevent and remedy hydrogeological instability, to develop green infrastructures and to fully take into account the value of natural capital and eco-system services in the decision-making process; stresses the need to support sustainable development at the local and regional level, as this is a key factor for green employment;
19. Recognises that linking sustainable agricultural production with the monitoring and protection of on-farm biodiversity and, subsequently, the use of smart labelling for agricultural products to mark their environmental impact, in order to stimulate consumer demand for biodiversity-friendly produce, represents a significant potential for green employment in EU rural areas;
20. Notes that sustainable forest management has real potential to create jobs while actively contributing to climate change mitigation and the protection of biodiversity;
21. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to phase out direct and indirect environmentally harmful subsidies including, but not limited to, those for fossil fuels; invites the Commission to develop models that can be implemented by Member States for shifting taxation from labour to environmental pollution, and to take into account the environmental impact of goods and services in the spirit of the polluter pays principle; calls on the Commission to issue country-specific recommendations to the Member States that can contribute to efforts to foster green employment and reduce ecological footprints; calls, furthermore, on the Commission to integrate in a proactive manner environmental and climate-related considerations into the European Semester in order to support green jobs creation;
22. Invites the Member States to introduce targeted subsidies and/or tax exemptions for start-ups, and for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, that provide goods and services offering high environmental added value, including overall reduced carbon content;
23. Stresses the opportunities that the 2030 Climate and Energy package provides in job creation and the future role that environmental legislation will play in achieving the EU's long-term environmental goals and in creating jobs and green growth;
24. Stresses that policies should be long-term and include ambitious, binding targets for resource efficiency, greenhouse gas reductions, renewable energies and energy savings, as well as indicators for measuring progress towards their achievement; stresses that policies should aim at minimising external environmental and societal costs and establish an appropriate price for greenhouse gas emissions;
25. Underlines the need for the Member States to prepare their economies for a low-carbon, resource- and energy-efficient future, while taking account of the possible risk of job relocation and carbon leakage due to the impact of climate policies;
26. Calls on the Commission to present its proposal to reform the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) as soon as possible, taking into account the need to protect industries exposed to a significant risk of 'carbon leakage';

27. Calls on the Member States to invest part of the proceeds from auctions of ETS greenhouse gas emission allowances with a view to establishing policies to assist climate change adaptation and protect biodiversity and sensitive habitats, and, in so doing, to generating green employment;
28. Calls on the Commission to address green employment in the implementation of the Energy Union;
29. Calls on the EU and the Member States to set mandatory energy-saving and efficiency targets, and to support white certificates as an instrument to facilitate the achievement of EU energy saving targets; calls on the Member States to implement fully, and to enforce, the Energy Efficiency Directive and to remain committed to achieve, at least, the 2030 energy efficiency targets;
30. Calls on the Member States to develop and implement ambitious modernisation plans for buildings in order to improve energy efficiency while alleviating the economic crisis that has hit the construction sector, and to achieve the EU target of nearly zero-energy consumption for all new buildings; calls, in this context, on the Member States to develop financing mechanisms for stimulating energy efficiency investments; invites the Commission to present its initiative ‘Smart Financing for Smart Buildings’ as soon as possible;
31. Calls on the Member States to make more efficient use of European funds, such as by financing low-interest revolving funds for promoting investments in renewable energy, energy savings and efficiency, waste and water management, green infrastructure, air quality, the restoration and preservation of biodiversity, and research and development programmes in innovative clean technologies;
32. Calls on the Member States to exploit fully the wide range of EU funds and available financial instruments – such as the European Structural and Investments Funds (ESIF), and the leverage potentiality that synergies between them can foster – to develop the green employment potential; urges the Commission and the Member States to prioritise the financing of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises through EFSI investments that support the development of the circular and green economy and the creation of green and sustainable jobs; calls on the Commission and the Member States to use the 2016 post-electoral revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) to promote the transition to a green economy;
33. Recognises that SMEs play a key role in the transition to a green economy and in the creation of green jobs; supports the objectives of the Green Action Plan for SMEs and its SME-oriented actions to improve resource efficiency, support green entrepreneurship, exploit opportunities for greener value chains and facilitate market access for green SMEs;
34. Recognises that the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) could help micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises to engage in activities involving a high degree of environmental and social innovation;
35. Notes that Eurobarometer data on green work in SMEs show that saving energy and reducing waste and the use of raw materials have become economically advantageous;

36. Calls on the Commission to stimulate new business models, such as cooperative enterprises, for increasing the efficiency of production and distribution processes, adopting innovative solutions to save resources and offering more sustainable products and services;
37. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to set up data banks on training courses for developing green skills among employees, and on job offers, and to share best practices on green employment in order to increase the opportunities for young people, especially in regions where the transition to a sustainable economy is particularly challenging; calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote adequate information campaigns on green employment;
38. Urges the Commission to lay down a framework for the implementation of the aforementioned measures with a view to bringing about coherent green job creation within the EU.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	6.5.2015
Result of final vote	+: 61 -: 7 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Marco Affronte, Margrete Auken, Pilar Ayuso, Zoltán Balczó, Catherine Bearder, Ivo Belet, Biljana Borzan, Lynn Boylan, Cristian-Silviu Buşoi, Nessa Childers, Birgit Collin-Langen, Mireille D'Ornano, Miriam Dalli, Angélique Delahaye, Jørn Dohrmann, Ian Duncan, Stefan Eck, Bas Eickhout, Eleonora Evi, José Inácio Faria, Karl-Heinz Florenz, Francesc Gambús, Iratxe García Pérez, Elisabetta Gardini, Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, Jens Gieseke, Sylvie Goddyn, Françoise Grossetête, Andrzej Grzyb, Jytte Guteland, György Hölvényi, Anneli Jäätteenmäki, Jean-François Jalkh, Josu Juaristi Abaunz, Karin Kadenbach, Kateřina Konečná, Giovanni La Via, Peter Liese, Norbert Lins, Valentinas Mazuronis, Susanne Melior, Miroslav Mikolášik, Massimo Paolucci, Gilles Pargneaux, Piernicola Pedicini, Pavel Poc, Marcus Pretzell, Frédérique Ries, Michèle Rivasi, Daciana Octavia Sârbu, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Davor Škrlec, Dubravka Šuica, Tibor Szanyi, Claudiu Ciprian Tănăsescu, Damiano Zoffoli
Substitutes present for the final vote	Renata Briano, Nicola Caputo, Mark Demesmaeker, Jan Huitema, Merja Kyllönen, James Nicholson, Aldo Patriciello, Marijana Petir, Gabriele Preuß, Bart Staes
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Arne Gericke, Catherine Stihler