



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2014 - 2019

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

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**2014/2221(INI)**

29.1.2015

## **OPINION**

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

for the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

on European Semester for economic policy coordination: Annual Growth  
Survey 2015  
(2014/2221(INI))

Rapporteur: Giorgos Grammatikakis

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## SUGGESTIONS

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

1. Stresses the fact that moving towards a truly sustainable economy will help contribute towards the achievement of the Union's environmental goals, and towards competitiveness and job creation; finds it regrettable that the lack of a European strategy for sustainable development during the economic crisis may result in further limited growth;
2. Underlines the fact that the European Semester, introduced in 2010, is establishing an annual cycle of economic policy coordination involving a detailed analysis of Member States' plans for budgetary, macroeconomic and structural reforms in order to achieve the Europe 2020 targets for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, including in the fields of climate change and energy, social exclusion and the fight against poverty;
3. Calls on the Commission to incorporate a European strategy for sustainable development, with a particular focus on resource efficiency and the circular economy, into the European Semester procedure;
4. Is concerned over the lack of clarity as to how the proposed Investment Plan for Europe will prioritise areas which foster sustainable development, such as education, and infrastructure which supports research and innovation;
5. Stresses the fact that without stronger investment the Union will fail to achieve its Europe 2020 targets for sustainable growth and its 2030 climate and energy targets; calls, therefore, on the Commission to orient the new investment package towards investments which contribute to sustainable development and resource efficiency by promoting the latest technologies in order to maximise its short-term impact on economic activity and job creation, as well as its long-term impact on the sustainability of growth in Europe;
6. Notes that, according to the Commission's Roadmap 2050 for energy, the decarbonisation of our energy system would cost EUR 260 billion annually while generating savings of more than EUR 310 billion;
7. Acknowledges that energy is an important factor for economic competitiveness; stresses the need to eliminate barriers to the single energy market by, inter alia, promoting energy independence; calls on the Commission to assess progress in this domain at both EU and national level, supporting measures to tackle fragmentation and implementation difficulties;
8. Stresses that investments in renewable energy production, energy distribution and the extensive renovation of buildings present high demands for labour force and will therefore contribute significantly to tackling unemployment, while shielding European growth from future fluctuations in energy imports and pricing;

9. Recalls the targets of the EU2020 strategy for renewable energy and greenhouse gas emissions; stresses the need to promote an interconnected infrastructure and closer integration with the transport sector as a cost-efficient means of deploying sustainable power generation technologies;
10. Stresses that reducing the EU's dependence on external energy sources must form part of its growth strategy; reiterates, therefore, the need to diversify external energy supplies, to upgrade the EU's energy infrastructure and to complete the EU internal energy market as key priorities of the EU energy security strategy;
11. Stresses the fact that national policies which are coordinated under the European Semester procedure must be consistent with the European sustainable development strategy; reiterates, therefore, the need to phase out fossil fuel subsidies and to shift taxes away from labour to polluting activities;
12. Stresses the importance of achieving full implementation for the current waste framework and the need to agree on a new ambitious waste policy at EU level in order to boost green growth and create jobs; underlines the crucial and cross-cutting importance of the circular economy package, which covers numerous policy areas and which will be a key driving force for the transition to sustainable economic growth and job creation; calls on the Commission to refrain from withdrawing the proposal for the review of the EU's waste policy;
13. Highlights the need for reforms in educational systems to enable future generations to prepare for the needs of the growing labour markets of the future, such as green technologies and health care;
14. Emphasises that in order for the Member States to boost employment by exploiting the employment potential of the green economy, action is required on three main fronts, namely boosting labour demand in eco-industries through adequate levels of investment, anticipating and managing skills needs in both green and greening sectors, and ensuring job quality for high-, medium-, and low-skill occupations; stresses that from the point of view of labour market policy, increased attention should be devoted to devising adequate training programmes to tackle specific skills shortages and to considering the dynamic relationship between the availability of skills and the age composition of the workforce in green and traditional industries;
15. Underlines the fact that the European Semester should be a tool for safeguarding high quality and high efficiency in national health systems; calls, therefore, on the Commission to incorporate the sustainability of social protection and healthcare systems into the European Semester priorities, while enhancing the effectiveness, equitability, accessibility and adequacy thereof in meeting social needs, and in reducing inequalities and poverty;
16. Stresses the importance of the sustainability of the healthcare sector, which plays an important role in the overall economy given that it represents 8 % of the total European workforce and 10% of the gross domestic product of the EU; recognises that health is a value in itself and a prerequisite for stability and economic growth, and that investment in both health and adequate access to healthcare services contributes to a healthy workforce and job opportunities in the Member States, better economic prosperity and social

cohesion, and can correct negative health externalities of populations;

17. Underlines the fact that the European Semester should be a tool for securing commitments by Member States to strengthen their healthcare systems to ensure high quality, accessible and equitable healthcare for all citizens;
18. Calls on both the Member States and the Commission, in this period of economic crisis, to avoid the most damaging of measures, such as short-term savings, which will lead to high costs in the mid to long term, and instead to concentrate on the further development of high-quality and high-efficiency healthcare systems;
19. Welcomes measures that make the European Semester process more effective and democratic; acknowledges that the implementation record is better in the area of public finance, in which surveillance tools are stronger; calls for the balanced integration of employment and socioeconomic indicators, which enable a more effective response to the divergences between some Member States regarding employment and their socioeconomic situations, as highlighted in the Joint Employment Report which accompanied the Annual Growth Survey 2015;
20. Urges the Commission to, in the context of the European Semester, to take better account of the targets of the Europe 2020 strategy as regards employment, R&D, climate change and energy sustainability, education, and poverty and social exclusion, assessing progress made towards a more sustainable society and proposing measures to reach these goals in a more effective and timely manner.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	29.1.2015
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 55 -: 11 0: 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Marco Affronte, Margrete Auken, Pilar Ayuso, Zoltán Balczó, Catherine Bearder, Ivo Belet, Simona Bonafè, Biljana Borzan, Nessa Childers, Alberto Cirio, Birgit Collin-Langen, Mireille D'Ornano, Miriam Dalli, Seb Dance, Angélique Delahaye, Jørn Dohrmann, Stefan Eck, Bas Eickhout, José Inácio Faria, Francesc Gambús, Elisabetta Gardini, Enrico Gasbarra, Jens Gieseke, Julie Girling, Sylvie Goddyn, Matthias Groote, Françoise Grossetête, Andrzej Grzyb, Jytte Guteland, Anneli Jäätteenmäki, Benedek Jávor, Josu Juaristi Abaunz, Karin Kadenbach, Kateřina Konečná, Giovanni La Via, Peter Liese, Norbert Lins, Valentinas Mazuronis, Susanne Melior, Massimo Paolucci, Gilles Pargneaux, Piernicola Pedicini, Bolesław G. Piecha, Pavel Poc, Marcus Pretzell, Frédérique Ries, Teresa Rodríguez-Rubio, Davor Škrlec, Renate Sommer, Tibor Szanyi, Nils Torvalds, Glenis Willmott, Jadwiga Wiśniewska
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Mark Demesmaeker, Herbert Dorfmann, Giorgos Grammatikakis, Jan Huitema, Peter Jahr, Merja Kyllönen, Nuno Melo, Marijana Petir, Julia Reid, Bart Staes, Kay Swinburne
<b>Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote</b>	Clara Eugenia Aguilera García, Damian Drăghici