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Plenary sitting

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B8-0037/2015

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 37(3) of the Rules of Procedure and the Framework
Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the Commission

on the Commission Work Programme 2015
(2014/2829(RSP))

Vicky Ford
on behalf of the ECR Group

B8-0037/2015

**European Parliament resolution on the Commission Work Programme 2015
(2014/2829(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the forthcoming communication on the Commission Work Programme 2015 and its three annexes:
 - ‘New Initiatives’;
 - ‘List of withdrawals or modifications of pending proposals’;
 - REFIT Actions,
- having regard to the ‘Political Guidelines’ of the President of the European Commission,
- having regard to the Europe 2020 strategy,
- having regard to the existing Framework Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the Commission, and in particular Annex 4 thereto,
- having regard to Rule 37(3) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Europe is in a global race in which only competitive economies will be able to create jobs and raise the living standards of their citizens;
- B. whereas the European Union faces a profound crisis of competitiveness in an increasing challenging global economy;
- C. whereas most other regions of the world are growing more quickly, with increasing levels of productivity and innovation;
- D. whereas the euro area public debt crisis has greatly damaged the European economy and has caused considerable hardship for millions;
- E. whereas the European election results in many countries revealed widespread dissatisfaction with many aspects of the EU and emphasised the need for reform;

**PART 1: GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE COMMISSION WORK
PROGRAMME 2015**

1. Welcomes the calls in the Commission Work Programme 2015 for better regulation, subsidiarity and transparency, and supports the principle of political discontinuity and the withdrawal of many initiatives; agrees that the focus should be on initiatives that deliver growth and jobs and allow businesses to flourish; believes the first priority must be to ensure that existing policies have a positive impact on competitiveness, are

properly implemented, and are fit for purpose; calls on the Commission to set an ambitious but realistic target for the reduction of red tape;

2. Believes that any new legislative proposals should pass a competitiveness test, requiring them to show a demonstrable net positive effect on competitiveness before they are submitted by the Commission;
3. Emphasises that whilst well-targeted public investment is necessary, for example, for improving education standards and developing some infrastructure, long-term growth is not achieved by increasing public expenditure in a way that would necessitate increasing the tax burden on already hard-pressed individuals and businesses, or by borrowing even more money which will have to be repaid by future generations; emphasises the importance of creating the right conditions to stimulate the private-sector investment that is essential for Europe's long-term economic recovery;
4. Supports a growth strategy whose objective would be to ensure that the right policy framework is in place to allow business and entrepreneurs to thrive, creating employment, generating wealth, and raising living standards; notes that the Europe 2020 strategy has set out a path for the future, but regrets that the political will has been lacking to give it sufficient momentum to ensure its full implementation;
5. Emphasises that European public spending cannot be exempt from the considerable efforts made by the Member States to bring their public spending under control, and insists that the Union budget must seek reductions to lighten the fiscal burden on taxpayers; believes that the EU budget should be clearly directed at helping Member States tackle structural challenges, especially the loss of competitiveness and consequent rising unemployment; insists on the need to reduce spending on EU administration (for example by ending the need for Parliament to meet in Strasbourg) and to achieve real reductions in the EU budget;
6. Insists on the principle of European added value, which should represent the cornerstone of all expenditure, which must also be guided by the principles of efficiency, effectiveness and value for money, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity as defined by Article 5 TEU and anchored in Protocol 1 on the role of national parliaments in the European Union;
7. Regrets the failure to mention subsidiarity in detail in the Commission's work programme; is convinced that adherence to this principle rather than any notion of 'ever closer union' would steer the European Union into a direction which would be more popular with the people of our European countries; suggests that the Commission at an early stage identify how better to recognise and adhere to the subsidiarity and proportionality principles, and in particular how it might better reflect such a policy in its interactions with national parliaments; insists that concerns over economic governance should not provide cover for a centralisation of social and employment policies;
8. Deplores the seemingly low priority the new Commission is giving to achieving effective management of the resources put at the disposal of the European Union, and specifically the complete lack of ambition to secure a positive statement of assurance by

the European Court of Auditors; condemns the failure of the new Commission to have a dedicated full-time Commissioner for Budgetary Control as repeatedly demanded by the European Parliament; believes that the failure to appoint a full-time Commissioner demonstrates that the new Commission either has little appreciation of the enormity of the challenge it faces or has little interest in addressing it; reiterates its call for the Commission to do all it can to pursue the introduction of standardised management declarations by Member States, signed at the appropriate political level and covering EU funds under shared management; emphasises the importance of systematic, regular and independent evaluations to ensure that all spending is achieving the desired outcomes in a cost-effective manner;

PART 2: SPECIFIC PROPOSALS FOR THE WORK PROGRAMME

‘A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment’

9. Believes that in order to create a more hospitable environment for job creation, the Commission should help Member States put in place the structural reforms needed to address the following factors: skills mismatches, entrepreneurship, demographics, market access, access to finance, labour market rigidities, administrative costs and better regulation;
10. Reiterates the importance of deepening the single market, and calls for the Commission’s ‘better regulation’ focus to deliver a healthy European business environment, cutting red tape, removing regulatory burdens and barriers to investment and encouraging a minimum of new legislation;
11. Welcomes an emphasis on private sector investment and call for the further removal of barriers to investment across the Union, particularly to investment for small and medium-sized businesses;
12. Welcomes the Commission’s political priority of lightening the regulatory load, and calls on the Commission, in the context of the Regulatory, Fitness and Performance (REFIT) programme, to rapidly implement the commitments set out in its communication;
13. Emphasises the importance of basing all regulatory and legislative proposals on evidence from businesses and other experts and interested parties, and calls on the President of the Commission to honour his pledge to retain the services of a Chief Scientific Advisor;
14. Acknowledges the Commission’s actions to address the results of the review of the ‘Top 10’ most burdensome laws for SMEs, which will help businesses create more employment opportunities; believes that the Commission should urgently prioritise the improvement of the laws in question in ways that address SMEs’ concerns; believes there is a need to ensure that the EU and Member States take account of the specific needs of, and considers support measures for businesses, in particular SMEs and micro-enterprises, in the policy process;

15. Highlights the recent trend of companies returning production and services to Europe and the opportunities this brings for job creation; calls on the Commission to consider how the EU can help businesses take advantage of the opportunities offered by this ‘reshoring’;
16. Notes the Commission’s intention to modernise copyright rules; nevertheless, requests that in any such reform subsidiarity is borne in mind and full attention is paid to cultural implications and equality of accessibility and to the principle that where best practice has already resulted in a satisfactory relationship between rightholders and commercial users of such rights, such arrangements should be respected and allowed to continue undisturbed;
17. Urges that the design of the new European Fund for Strategic Investments be tailored to complement the Structural Funds, and that any innovative financial instruments to be promoted in conjunction with that fund for the purposes of increasing the impact of the Structural Funds should be designed in a sustainable way that takes into account the best interests of the regions; calls for the fund to be structured in a manner that avoids the nationalisation of losses and the privatisation of gains;
18. Welcomes the Commission’s strong commitment to better lawmaking and the REFIT agenda; supports the use of fitness checks, and calls for more attention to be paid to them by the Commission; is encouraged by the approach shown in the Work Programme of ‘clearing the decks’, and believes that a fresh start is precisely what is required in many policy areas; cautions that where proposals are withdrawn in order to be replaced by new proposals, those new initiatives should not introduce greater burdens on people and businesses affected;
19. Supports the continued development and modernisation of the EU’s intellectual property laws, and in particular efforts to improve how copyright functions; undertakes to examine in detail the Commission’s proposals in this area, in line with its aim to facilitate the growth and completion of the digital single market; reminds the Commission that an appropriate balance must be struck between the interests of all actors involved in copyright-related activities, and that without adequate enforcement intellectual property rights will not deliver value for all those concerned;
20. Welcomes the emphasis on investment and call for the further removal of barriers to investment across the Union; welcomes the withdrawal of the investor compensation scheme; supports measures to enable retail financial services to deliver more benefits to consumers;
21. Believes that the externalities of developments in the above-mentioned financial sector should be carefully monitored; expresses concern regarding the development of different standards among equal competitors as a consequence of the standardisation of financial regulations; notes the considerable advancement in EU banking regulation, since 2008 and particularly in 2013; believes that a comprehensive analysis of the competitive aspects of the vast amount of new EU financial regulation is in order.

'A Connected Digital Single Market'

22. Strongly supports the prioritisation of the Digital Single Market, by reason of the opportunities that digital activities can generate for jobs, growth, innovation and competitiveness; notes that the following themes need to be addressed: trust, privacy and data protection, cybercrime and security, accessibility, digital content and copyright, interoperability and standards, e-payments, electronic contracting, tendering and invoicing, e-government, digital infrastructure, e-procurement, public sector information and open data, roaming, and online intermediaries;
23. Strongly supports new legislative and non-legislative initiatives in the Digital Single Market which prioritise growth, and suggests these initiatives should be part of a 'Digital Single Market Act'; stresses that non-legislative and legislative initiatives which have the most potential to generate growth, jobs and competitiveness, including e-commerce, should be prioritised in a Digital Single Market Act following the approach of the Single Market Acts;
24. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to unlocking e-commerce, since consumers could save over EUR 11.7 billion a year if they could choose from a wider range of goods and services when shopping online; in this regard, stresses that issues relating to online-only services, access to digital content, fraud prevention, website registration, sales promotions and labelling have all been identified as obstacles to the Digital Single Market;
25. Highlights its recent 'Digital Single Market Act' resolution, which was adopted by a large majority and outlined key growth areas to be addressed in the Digital Single Market, including e-commerce, 'big data' and cloud computing; recalls that this resolution also drew attention to the crucial importance of accessibility and online safety;
26. Awaits the Commission's strategy, which will identify the major challenges for the completion of a secure, trustworthy and dynamic Digital Single Market; would particularly welcome simplifications for consumers when making online digital purchases, but notes the importance of consumers being afforded the same level of protection as in their own traditional market;
27. Supports the Commission's efforts to conclude the EU's Data Protection Regulation; in this regard asks that any reforms to data protection law be proportionate and workable and protect both consumer and privacy rights while also enabling businesses, the economy and innovation to flourish;
28. Calls for the monitoring of trends in the provision of services in the expected telecoms reform, with particular reference to offers relating to bundled content and services, so as to ensure that large operators do not abuse dominant positions to the detriment of consumers;
29. Stresses that the non-controversial elements of the Connected Continent Package, with regard to consumer contracts and data consumption, should be prioritised in the negotiations on the package so that progress can be made;

30. Highlights significant concerns regarding tax measures in the digital economy, particularly Value-Added Tax (VAT) and Mini One-Stop Shop (MOSS), especially for micro-entities, and urges the Commission to reconsider urgently the need for a threshold for such businesses;

‘A Resilient Energy Union with a Forward-Looking Climate Change Policy’

31. Stresses the importance of affordability, sustainability and security of energy supply; considers competition policy to be of vital importance in encouraging unbundling and addressing the current fragmentation of the market; notes that regulation of state aid in this field must be done in the same spirit as any other;
32. Emphasises, given the ongoing events in Ukraine, that energy security must be enhanced through a series of measures across a spectrum of options, such as diversification of suppliers, improvements in energy efficiency to reduce consumption, and increased use of indigenous sources of energy, as well as substantial investment in infrastructure; calls for the idea of ‘collective purchasing’ of gas and other energy products to be clarified; stresses that further cooperation regarding energy negotiations must go hand in hand with reinforcing competition within the internal market, as being key to security of supply in the long term while also contributing to our diversification goals;
33. Awaits proposals that elaborate on the ‘Energy Union’, and supports efforts to improve the functioning of the internal energy market and measures that will improve cross-border infrastructure such as interconnectors to this end; encourages the Commission to ensure that the development of indigenous sources of energy is a key part of the Energy Union; reminds the Commission, however, that it is Member States’ responsibility to determine their own energy mix, and that any future decarbonisation and emission reduction policy must take into account the need to ensure energy security and diversification (not sustainability in isolation as has been the case in the past);
34. Notes, in the context of a strategic framework for the Energy Union, the recent agreement at the October European Council on the 2030 climate and energy policy, and particularly welcomes the absence of binding renewable targets per Member State, as the current targets have proved to be inflexible, costly and have throttled investment in other low carbon energy technologies such as Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS); insists, however, that in the context of this framework it is imperative that provisions to protect industrial sectors at risk of carbon leakage be maintained;
35. Notes that the Commission will review the decision-making process for the authorisation of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs); suggests that 2015 is too early to propose any new change to the EU’s legal framework on GMOs, as the impact of the revised Directive on the Deliberate Release into the Environment of GMOs (2001/18/EC) has to be assessed first;
36. Notes First Vice-President Timmermans’ commitment to maintain the proposal on the National Emission Ceilings (NEC) Directive, and bring forward modified proposals to better reflect synergies with the 2030 energy and climate package and reduce administrative burdens, given the importance of tackling air quality to address

significant public health concerns and the urgency of meeting internationally agreed 2020 limits; calls on the Commission to ensure that all additional amendments strictly follow the smart regulation agenda and facilitate better implementation; requests that the decision to modify the original proposal does not result in any unnecessary delays;

37. Believes that investing in a circular economy can be fully compatible with the Commission's jobs, growth and competitiveness agenda and has the potential to create a win-win situation for all stakeholders involved; therefore urges the Commission to work with the Member States on reaching these goals and if necessary, reconsider the withdrawal;
38. Requests that the Commission elucidate the timescale and process regarding the withdrawal and adoption of a new modified legislative proposal on the Circular Economy;
39. Asks the Commission to withdraw its proposals for a Soil Framework Directive and a Directive on Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, given the undue financial and administrative burdens which they would impose on European business, thereby threatening growth and jobs;

'A Deeper and Fairer Internal Market with a Strengthened Industrial Base'

40. Welcomes the Commission's plan to deliver an Internal Market Strategy for goods and services in order to improve mutual recognition and further strengthen key industrial and services sectors where economic potential is the greatest, including business services, construction, retail, regulated professions, and enhanced services and goods provision;
41. Strongly supports the Commission's decision to remove and modify the Common European Sales Law; notes that the current proposal has drawn concerns from some consumer organisations and believes that any modified proposal should be based on model contracts, which would be simpler for consumers and businesses to understand; notes, furthermore and in the context of this proposal, that it is essential for consumers to be afforded the same level of protection online as they receive offline in their traditional market;
42. Stresses the importance of the implementation of existing single market rules, evaluating implementation problems and analysing existing barriers and opportunities, while making sure that all new measures are impact-assessed and future-proof and are fit for the digital age;
43. Calls on the Council and Commission to further strengthen the implementation and enforcement of agreed single market legislation, in particular in relation to the goods and services sector, and to make greater use of the mutual evaluation and mutual recognition principles;

44. Calls for greater use of a proportionality test, linked to the mutual evaluation process, to identify disproportionate rules that inhibit the provision of services, and for the legislation identified to be repealed should it be deemed necessary by a significant number of Member States;
45. Calls for the abolition of the ‘economic needs test’, which can be used to restrict access to markets;
46. Highlights the role of public procurement in enhancing innovation and crucial access to markets;
47. Urges the Commission to enhance the role of the Points of Single Contact so that they can assist service providers with any queries they may have when establishing themselves in another Member State (thus not only assisting those covered by the Services Directive), also providing information about the applicable tax system;
48. Supports initiatives that contribute to rejuvenating the industrial base of European countries, which needs support in terms of research and innovation, access to finance, and also a better regulatory environment that affords more flexibility to companies; looks forward to the specific measures to be proposed to alleviate regulatory and administrative burdens on SMEs;
49. Emphasises the continued implementation of Horizon 2020, in particular its efforts towards a greater focus on turning world-class research into products and services that can contribute to reviving the competitiveness of the European economies;
50. Notes the Commission’s intention to withdraw the ground handling proposal, and stresses that the monopolies that still exist at certain large EU airports should be tackled by means of a new proposal on ground handling, with appropriate regard for those Member States where such services are already liberalised; calls for a degree of liberalisation and competition to be achieved by increasing the number of service providers at large EU airports, as this will improve the efficiency and quality of airport operations and reduce charges for airport users and passengers; emphasises, however, that the new proposal should not touch upon social issues, in particular staff transfers, nor the setting and enforcement of minimum quality standards for ground handling services;
51. Is concerned over the lack of clarity and transparency of the regulatory framework and investment allocation decision-making of the Investment Plan for Europe in regard to transport infrastructure projects: stresses the importance of clarity, as the Fund will facilitate private investment in safer transport infrastructure projects, particularly in industrial centres, whilst noting that the overall aims and funding priorities of the CEF and the TEN-T policy are to grant EU funding to less profitable large-scale cross-border projects of common interest (around nine core network corridors), to develop a comprehensive multimodal EU transport network, and to address the lack of appropriate infrastructure and accessibility and low interoperability existing between different parts and regions of the EU;

52. Stresses that the Russian Federation is still refusing to respect the agreement on the phasing-out of Siberian overflight royalties, and that, in the context of recent EU sanctions against Russia, Russia has threatened to ban European airlines from using Siberian airspace; urges the Commission to put in place effective legal measures (including reciprocal measures refusing or limiting use of Union airspace by air carriers of the Russian Federation) to force Russia to stop charging illegal fees which subject Union carriers to long-term discriminatory conditions and hamper free and fair competition between airlines on routes between the EU and Asia;
53. Agrees with the withdrawal of the outdated proposal on aviation security charges; whilst supporting the need for aviation security charges to be fair and proportionate, is sceptical about the future of this proposal, given the numerous difficulties surrounding it, including the scope of the directive, cost-relatedness issues and state financing; believes common principles for levying security charges at Community airports should be aligned with the Airport Charges Directive;

‘A Deeper and Fairer Economic and Monetary Union’

54. Emphasises that subsidiarity in the field of taxation is vital to the democratic and economic health of Europe; rejects any moves to use concerns relating to economic governance as a pretext to impose taxation policies at EU level;
55. Welcomes the idea of a Capital Markets Union or a Single Capital Market, but will closely follow the Commission’s consultation and emerging action plan in order to ensure that what is concerned is ambitious in its vision and is not solely a technical removal of barriers;
56. Welcomes the proposal for the recovery and resolution of critical market infrastructures in order to ensure adequate protection of investors’ assets within those entities;
57. Notes that global commitments shifting bilaterally traded products into multilateral market infrastructure increase the stress being put on these institutions;
58. Agrees therefore that systemically relevant financial institutions need to demonstrate proper governance and strong risk management for the benefit of the system as a whole;
59. Calls for the focus to remain on growth-friendly fiscal consolidation; believes that boosting investment should not be seen as an alternative to necessary structural reforms;
60. Questions some details of the investment package, and asks specifically: How will the investment fund select and prioritise projects? How will it leverage private investment? How will the fund avoid a situation of privatising the profits and nationalising the losses?;
61. Welcomes the Commission’s recognition of the competence of Member States over their taxation systems;

62. Reiterates its strong objection to a Financial Transaction Tax (FTT) unless it is implemented at a global level, and reminds the Commission of its lack of support for the previous Common Consolidate Corporate Tax base (CCCTB) proposal;
63. Notes that exchange of relevant information between tax authorities could be helpful, but stresses that EU Member States cannot afford to be put at a competitive disadvantage whilst seeking investment and economic recovery;
64. Calls for a thorough analysis of the eurozone's economic situation;
65. Calls for comparisons to be made between the eurozone recovery and recoveries in third countries and regions;
66. Calls for more emphasis on non-forms of bank financing, such as venture capital and crowdfunding;

'A Reasonable and Balanced Free Trade Agreement with the US'

67. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to reviewing EU trade and investment policy, as well as the proposed emphasis on its contribution to jobs and growth across the EU; requests that the review be broad-based, strategic and forward-looking, covering all aspects of trade and investment policy including bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral negotiations and autonomous measures with a particular focus on addressing trading relations, not only with large emerging nations and key strategic partners worldwide but also with member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) with which the EU does not currently have deep and comprehensive free trade agreements;
68. Urges the Commission to dedicate sufficient resources to furthering an ambitious trade agenda with trading partners globally, including working towards completing negotiations for a deep, comprehensive and balanced Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), while noting that trade policy should not be limited to this area but should include all multilateral, plurilateral and bilateral trade and investment agreements currently under negotiation;
69. Recognises the enormous potential of a successful Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), since it will make exporting cheaper and easier for businesses of all sizes on both sides of the Atlantic, with the prospect of adding more than EUR 100 billion to the European economies through improved market access and tariff elimination or reduction;
70. Acknowledges the Commission's communication of 25 November concerning transparency in the TTIP negotiations, and considers this a positive step towards improving transparency, stakeholder consultation and access to documents alike, while ensuring the retention of the degree of confidentiality necessary for trade negotiators to reach a sound final deal; expresses its willingness to work together with the Commission in order to ensure implementation of the provisions of this communication as early as possible in 2015;

71. Recognises the great benefits for all sides of a sound Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA) with India, and calls for fresh energy to be injected into the negotiations; also calls for the swift resumption of talks with a view to a comprehensive agreement covering, inter alia, the service sector (insurance, banking, postal services, legal services, advertising, distribution, retail, etc) and the industrial sector (automobiles, wines and spirits, infrastructure), and ensuring stronger safeguards for intellectual property;
72. Requests the Commission, as part of its work in 2015, to propose draft directives to be addressed to the Member States for the modernisation of the existing Agreement with Mexico; calls for these directives to include ambitious provisions for the mutual opening-up of markets, addressing tariffs, non-tariff barriers and technical barriers to trade across a wide range of sectors, including but not limited to: financial services, professional services, insurance, public procurement, chemicals, processed foods, trade in energy, intellectual property and automotive industries;
73. Regrets that the Commission has not given a commitment to withdraw its proposal for a regulation establishing rules of access of third-country goods and services to the EU's internal market in public procurement, despite the strong opposition from a large number of Member States to what many see as a protectionist measure which could entail significant trading difficulties with certain trading partners, including possible retaliatory market closures not only in public procurement but in other key sectors; believes that the issues identified by the Commission would be better addressed in bilateral negotiations for deep and comprehensive free trade agreements or by encouraging further countries to join the Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA);
74. Expresses its concern regarding the Commission's request for an ECJ opinion on the EU's Agreement with Singapore and the lengthy delay this will entail in bringing this agreement into force;

'An Area of Justice and Fundamental Rights Based on Mutual Trust'

75. Supports the Commission's efforts to withdraw legislative proposals which do not find support in the Council, and in this context believes it is correct to withdraw the maternity leave directive while acknowledging Member States' right to adopt provisions going beyond the minimum requirements of the EU legislation;
76. Fully supports the fight against cross-border crime and corruption; regrets, however, that despite significant opposition within the Council and serious concerns regarding proportionality, legal base, subsidiarity and fundamental rights, that the Commission has not withdrawn the proposal for the European Public Prosecutor;
77. Fully supports the Commission's commitment to help address threats to the internal security of Member States in relation to foreign fighters and terrorism; in this regard, urges the Commission to include the expedient adoption of the EU-PNR Directive as a priority of its work programme;

78. Welcomes the fact that cybercrime will be a priority in the European Agenda on Security; calls for strong action by the Commission with regard to the protection of children online;
79. Regrets that the Commission has demanded that listed companies within the European Union ensure that they meet a quota of 40 % of the under-represented sex on their boards; notes that the Commission itself is composed of 32 % women and 68 % men; insists that company board appointments should be on merit alone, and therefore asks the Commission to withdraw the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges and related measures (COM(2012)0614);
80. Urges the Commission to work with Member States and third countries to take a series of measurable steps to eradicate practices that are harmful to women and girls, including child and forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), honour killings, forced sterilisation, rape in conflict, stoning and all other forms of brutality; urges the Commission to work with the European External Action Service (EEAS) to improve the support available for victims of such brutality;
81. Strongly supports action to end all forms of discrimination and policies which recognise the importance of the family as the bedrock of society; welcomes the Commission's commitment to support women in their participation in the labour market;

'Towards a New Policy on Migration'

82. Supports the need for a firm but fair approach to the EU's migration policy; fully supports the Commission's call for the need to combat abuse within the EU's migration system;
83. Reminds the Commission of the great concern existing in some Member States regarding the abuse of social benefits among residents from other Member States; stresses that benefits and welfare payments are entirely for the Member States to decide;
84. Supports the need for migration to be linked to the EU's external policy, and calls on the Commission to prioritise cooperation with third countries, including the Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and Middle East regions, through returns, resettlement programmes, and migration management agreements with countries of origin and transit countries; also calls on the Commission to offer further assistance through humanitarian, political, and training assistance;
85. Calls on the Commission to address the deficiencies existing regarding the quality of detention conditions and asylum procedures within the EU, since both these factors have a significant impact on dealing with migratory pressures in an effective and efficient manner;

86. Fully supports the Commission's call for firm measures to be taken towards people traffickers and smugglers, as well as the provision of assistance to third countries through education and training to highlight the risks of human trafficking; strongly urges the Commission to prioritise and implement concrete measures to address the shameful practice of modern slavery;
87. Calls on the Commission to examine how the future role of FRONTEX and the European Asylum Support Office can be improved in future in order to address the migratory pressures and challenges which the EU faces, both in maintaining the security of the external borders and preventing loss of life at sea;
88. Calls for a full analysis to be carried out by the Commission as to the effectiveness of the use of EU resources and funding in the area of migration and asylum, particularly the use of Home Affairs Funds and especially in relation to asylum, integration, border controls and returns;

'A Stronger Global Actor'

89. Respects the right of Member States to take unilateral decisions on foreign affairs, security and defence policy, and, where appropriate, encourages the development of common responses through the European Council to shared existing and emerging threats and challenges;
90. Reaffirms its commitment to working in cooperation with, not in competition to, organisations such as the UN, NATO and the G20, so as to ensure the EU and its Member States can effectively face existing and emerging foreign and security challenges, particularly in the Union's eastern and southern neighbourhoods;
91. Urges the Commission to use the opportunity provided by the 2015 Year of Development to instigate a programme of regular reviews of the Cotonou Agreement, particularly in the context of human rights and democracy clauses;
92. Believes that the future Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) need to see a substantial reduction in the number of objectives and targets in order to make the post-2015 development agenda more coherent and effective, and that greater emphasis must be placed on economic growth and wealth creation in developing countries themselves, on trade, and on supporting SMEs by creating a friendly environment for small business owners and facilitating access to financial services; encourages new efforts to combat corruption, money laundering and illicit flows of capital, as an overriding priority in financing development;
93. Calls for a single, compelling and communicable set of goals for eradicating extreme poverty through sustainable development by 2030, which should focus on: economic growth and wealth creation, including sustainable consumption and production as a key element in sustainable development; peace, good governance, transparency and accountable institutions; and freedom from violence and the rule of law;
94. Calls for refocusing the development efforts towards trade and investment for development, and highlights the importance of the negotiated Economic Partnership

Agreements (EPAs) as these are essential development instruments based on reciprocity and trade liberalisation among regional members; believes that the EPA discussions next year are an opportunity to call for an efficient monitoring of these agreements and ensure that our relations with the ACP countries are consistent with our development goals;

95. Calls for long-term measures to prevent future outbreaks of disease; stresses the need for substantial investment in local healthcare systems, as properly staffed, well-supplied clinics would help affiliated countries handle not just temporary crises, but also more commonly prevalent diseases such as malaria and diarrheic diseases;

‘A Union of Democratic Change’

Institutional issues

96. Reminds the Commission of the promises made by President Juncker to accept a ‘fair deal’ with the UK and other Member States that wish to recover areas of sovereignty; calls on the Commission to start negotiations by introducing the issue at the first upcoming IGC and to keep it as an ongoing topic until the negotiations can be concluded;
97. Is concerned at the lack of transparency at the European Court of Justice (ECJ); calls, therefore, on the Court to allow its judges to present dissenting opinions, in line with the existing practice of other international courts and specifically of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg;
98. Notes the opinion delivered by the ECJ regarding the agreement on accession of the EU to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR); questions the value of proceeding with this accession, given the added complexity and uncertainty that will emerge from having two competing jurisdictions in the area of Convention rights and Charter rights; continues to believe that accession should not be a priority for the EU, and that, instead, reform of the ECHR should be sought by its contracting parties in order to improve its decision-making, as a priority in the area of human rights;
99. Welcomes the commitments to better lawmaking and transparency, particularly with regard to future revision of interinstitutional agreements; believes these types of institutional reforms are needed in order to restore confidence and modernise the mindset of often dated institutions and outlooks; nevertheless expresses great disappointment that reform has not been a more explicit driver for this Work Programme;

Budget issues

100. Calls on the Commission to work together with the Member States to ensure that stronger disciplines and processes are introduced which would allow for better and more efficient spending; believes that the existing payment problem must be urgently addressed and sustainable long term solutions found;

101. Stresses that the EU budget must be an investment budget focused on delivering concrete results; believes that the budget must focus on areas of spending that offer clear and demonstrable added value, with all instruments being spent as effectively as possible; calls in this regard for more and better scrutiny;
102. Recalls that European public spending cannot be exempt from the considerable efforts made by the Member States to bring their public spending under control; insists that efficiency reductions be made in the staffing of the EU institutions, that any call for staff to address new priorities be met by compensatory reductions elsewhere, and that significant reductions be therefore made in the budgets of the EU institutions;
103. Insists that the Union budget must not add additional fiscal burdens on taxpayers and should be clearly directed at helping Member States tackle the present structural challenges, including regaining our competitiveness;
104. Believes that the decision-making process surrounding the annual budgetary procedure must be revised; believes in this regard that the Council should set the budget, while Parliament together with the Commission should set the spending priorities and fully scrutinise all spending in terms of outcomes;

Common Agricultural Policy

105. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to simplification of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP); reiterates, however, that this simplification should go further than just legislative tidying-up and should focus on simplifying the many regulatory burdens faced by farmers throughout the EU; notes in this regard that the most recent CAP reform has significantly increased the complexity of the CAP;
106. Notes the Commission's commitment to review the 'greening' measures within direct payments after the first year of application; however, strongly urges the Commission to ensure that this review becomes a full mid-term review of all aspects of the CAP, not just of the greening measures, with a view to making the policy fairer and less burdensome on farmers and national administrations and ensuring that European farmers can be competitive in the global marketplace;
107. Urges the Commission to delay the introduction of greening measures under the first pillar of the CAP for one year, in order to allow time to address the severe difficulties that many national administrations are having in their attempts to implement these reforms;
108. Stresses that the EU has very high food safety and health standards, which are vital to ensure the confidence of EU consumers, and reiterates that these standards should not be compromised or negotiated away in trade deals that the EU is seeking to conclude with third countries.

Common Fisheries Policy

109. Regrets that there is no reference to the implementation, enforcement and monitoring of the reformed Common Fishery Policy (CFP), as 1 January 2015 onwards will see a

number of significant changes to the CFP: strengthening the regional aspect of the CFP, implementing the discard ban whilst providing legal certainty for fishermen, meeting maximum sustainable yield (MSY) targets, and collecting all data necessary for better management of European fisheries resources; recognises that further reforms are still necessary;

110. Urges the Commission to work closely with Member States especially with regard to supporting small-scale fisheries, preservation of traditional fishing methods, and greater national and regional control of fish stock and practices;
111. Calls on the Commission to present an impact assessment on leisure fisheries and their impact on EU fish resources, which will be in line with the existing rules of the CFP;
112. Acknowledges that the Baltic Multi-Species Management Plan and the entry into force of the landing obligation, as foreseen in the CFP reforms, will replace a number of regulations which are currently blocked in Council; asks the Commission to monitor the implementation of the Baltic Multi-Species Management Plan and the introduction of the landing obligation;
113. Urges the Commission to consider lifting the ban on pulse fishing in the forthcoming revision of the Technical Measures regulation, recalling that this technique is sustainable and innovative and would contribute to reducing discards;
114. Urges the Commission to work specifically with Iceland in brokering a fisheries agreement which would protect the long-term health of mackerel;

Regional Policy

115. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to building a closer partnership with Member States, national parliaments and regions in order to improve the implementation and effectiveness of the Structural Funds, and to introducing the new rules for the Funds for 2014-2020 as smoothly as possible; stresses the importance of simplification in enhancing accessibility to the funds and the elimination of irregularities and fraud;

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116. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.