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Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

2007/2156(INI)

19.12.2007

OPINION

of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on the demographic future of Europe
(2007/2156(INI))

Draftswoman: Bilyana Ilieva Raeva

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SUGGESTIONS

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

1. Supports the Commission in establishing a long-term demographic strategy at the EU level; underlines that any solution must contain elements of public finance, appropriate economic growth, employment and labour market policies, effective policies in support of demographic renewal and policies relating to education, lifelong learning and healthcare, and must consider the different practices as regards social benefits in the Member States;
2. Recalls that the Member States should meet their obligations under the Stability and Growth Pact as a way of overcoming demographic challenges;
3. Is concerned about the forecasted increase in the age-related expenditures and its effects, which put enormous pressure on the sustainability of the Member States' public finances; calls on the Member States to modernise pension systems (contribution-based, occupational and private) and to develop new financial products for long-term care; welcomes the use of a variety of financial instruments, while stressing the need for security and transparency for individuals to save and invest;
4. Calls upon the Member States to consider tax incentives for companies employing older workers in order to ease the burden on public spending on the one hand and employees in the form of tax relief for marginal income received in addition to their pension on the other, so as to make it easier for them to remain in the employment market on a voluntary basis; urges the Member States to provide for flexible policies for those leaving the labour market and introducing lifelong training practices;
5. Asks the Commission to conduct a study based on gender-disaggregated data on tax benefits and existing barriers related to employment with a focus on the ageing population;
6. Calls upon the Commission and the Member States to further accelerate the process of freedom of movement for all workers within an enlarged European Union even before 2014;
7. Recalls that boosting the number of jobs is a high priority; invites the Commission and the Member States to propose incentives and favourable conditions for the easy entry of young people into the labour market by supporting, for example, mentoring between workers having reached retirement age and young workers through job-sharing and part-time schemes, more intensive participation in extra-mural training, more part-time jobs and distance working for young people and for people with care responsibilities;
8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to use stricter measures against any evasion of tax and social security contributions ensuring the sustainability of pension

schemes; agrees that the ratio of social benefits for unemployment to the minimum salary level in certain Member States is far too low in a way that it can undermine potential employment; urges the Member States to provide for flexible systems and opportunities for personal choice with regard to the time of retirement (beyond the minimum age threshold) through incentives for workers who decide to continue to work longer and disincentives for early retirement not caused by illness;

9. Stresses the need to define and coordinate immigration policies between the Member States with the twin aim of meeting the needs of the labour market and funding national pension systems while guaranteeing immigrants equal living and working conditions; calls on the Commission to consider and submit as soon as possible a specific strategy and measures relating to economic immigration;
10. Calls on the Member States to focus on the impact of demographic changes on the economy in their National Reform Programmes with a view to the new stage of the Lisbon Strategy and to closely coordinate macroeconomic policies so that the growth, competitiveness and productivity of the EU can meet the demographic challenges; asks the Commission to set up benchmarks based on best practices of the most successful countries with economic and social strategies overcoming demographic challenges.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	19.12.2007
Result of final vote	+: 34 -: 1 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Mariela Velichkova Baeva, Zsolt László Becsey, Pervenche Berès, Slavi Binev, Sebastian Valentin Bodu, Sharon Bowles, Udo Bullmann, Jonathan Evans, Elisa Ferreira, José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil, Donata Gottardi, Gunnar Hökmark, Karsten Friedrich Hoppenstedt, Guntars Krasts, Kurt Joachim Lauk, Andrea Losco, Astrid Lulling, Gay Mitchell, John Purvis, Alexander Radwan, Bernhard Rapkay, Heide Rühle, Antolín Sánchez Presedo, Olle Schmidt, Peter Skinner, Margarita Starkevičiūtė, Cornelis Visser, Sahra Wagenknecht
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Jorgo Chatzimarkakis, Daniel Dăianu, Werner Langen, Gianni Pittella, Bilyana Ilieva Raeva, Andreas Schwab
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	Theodor Dumitru Stolojan