



2018/2119(INI)

31.1.2019

OPINION

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

for the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

on the European Semester for economic policy coordination: Annual Growth Survey 2019
(2018/2119(INI))

Rapporteur: Andrey Kovatchev

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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. Calls on the Commission to adapt the European Semester process to a new long-term strategic framework guided by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to support Member States in achieving environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive growth; reiterates the importance of monitoring the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights to ensure significant progress in the realisation of its key principles, in particular the right to access high-quality preventive healthcare that is affordable for all;
2. Emphasises that social, climate and environmental policy should play a full role in the European Semester process, in addition to its economic dimensions; calls for the inclusion of indicators oriented towards measuring sustainability and well-being;
3. Stresses that continued decoupling of energy and resource use from economic growth is needed to achieve the EU's 2030 climate and energy targets, in line with the commitments made under the Paris Agreement;
4. Calls on the Commission to include in the European Semester the objective of achieving a climate-neutral economy; recalls the EU's commitment to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 through a socially fair transition, and in a cost-efficient manner;
5. Highlights that the decarbonisation of the EU's economy will stimulate significant additional investment; recalls that today around 2 % of the EU's GDP is invested in its energy system and related infrastructure; notes that this would have to increase to 2.8 % in order to achieve a net-zero greenhouse gas economy, which requires considerable additional investments compared with the baseline;
6. Recalls the need to align the EU's financing commitments with the Paris climate goals, including assessing that investments support or are compatible with climate objectives, ramping up climate finance, and mainstreaming climate reporting on financial flows;
7. Underlines the need to integrate into the European Semester the climate and energy goals set by Member States under the regulation on the governance of the Energy Union and climate action¹;
8. Stresses that greening the economy and investing in more efficient healthcare systems will enhance Europe's capacity to improve the well-being of its citizens; notes that short-term fiscal implications of structural reforms and their long-term environmental, economic and social effects should be taken into account;
9. Considers it important to use the European Semester to accelerate the transition towards a resource-efficient, circular, net-zero emission, energy-efficient economy based on

¹ Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action, OJ L 328, 21.12.2018, p. 1.

renewable energy and contributing to sustainable development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals; reiterates the importance of EU financial support for coal- and carbon-intensive regions to enable a just energy transition to clean technologies and energy-efficiency solutions, while creating sustainable jobs;

10. Considers the European Semester to be an essential tool without which the EU biodiversity targets, and the respective socio-economic benefits, will not be reached;
11. Welcomes the proposed allocation of EU funding in the next programming period to support Member States in the implementation of recommendations and structural reforms, but stresses that this linkage should not take the form of a conditionality; calls for the adoption of a longer-term perspective in the monitoring and assessment of reform progress;
12. Welcomes the recognition in the European Semester that Member States should pay particular attention to the adaptability of the workforce, to ensure they have the right skills to match technological progress; stresses, in this context, the need to adopt a just transition approach, ensuring inclusion and participation of all those affected, and supporting the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs;
13. Welcomes the fact that in the area of healthcare the European Semester process shifted the focus from cost-saving to health system performance, recognising the importance of health outcomes and access to high-quality healthcare that is affordable to all; calls for the development of common indicators and methodologies to assess the performance of healthcare systems with the aim of reducing health inequalities; supports the efforts to develop common indicators and methodologies to enable the assessment of national healthcare systems' performance, including inequalities and gaps in access to healthcare;
14. Stresses that effective investment in healthcare, including health research and disease prevention, is essential for providing citizens with equal access to high-quality healthcare services; underlines the importance of the sustainability of the healthcare sector;
15. Underlines the importance of structured and systematic dialogue with civil society at national level with a view to increasing ownership; believes that the Commission should gather input from a broad range of stakeholders and ensure more publicity around the country-specific recommendations (CSRs) and country reports, including through more discussions at a higher political level;
16. Calls on the Commission to give a territorial dimension to the European Semester at both analytical and operational level; considers, furthermore, that in order to ensure the effective management of structural policies, regional and local authorities must be involved in drawing up and taking decisions on these policies by means of a top-down mixed planning process and vice versa;
17. Calls for structured involvement of civil society and environmental organisations within the European Semester process, and for greater involvement of environment ministers within the European Semester process at Council level;

18. Calls for greater coherence with other EU policies, such as those related to climate change and unsustainable exploitation of natural resources;
19. Stresses the need to strengthen the European common response capacity to disasters such as drought in southern European countries, catastrophic floods, forest fires and earthquakes; stresses the need to encourage greater cooperation on the advanced planning of European disaster-response operations by, among other measures, mapping Member States' assets, drawing up contingency plans and improving risk-management planning.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	29.1.2019
Result of final vote	+: 43 -: 8 0: 2
Members present for the final vote	Marco Affronte, Margrete Auken, Pilar Ayuso, Zoltán Balczó, Catherine Bearder, Ivo Belet, Paul Brannen, Soledad Cabezón Ruiz, Nessa Childers, Birgit Collin-Langen, Miriam Dalli, Seb Dance, Mark Demesmaeker, Bas Eickhout, José Inácio Faria, Francesc Gambús, Elisabetta Gardini, Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, Jens Gieseke, Julie Girling, Sylvie Goddyn, Françoise Grossetête, Andrzej Grzyb, Jytte Guteland, Anneli Jäätteenmäki, Jean-François Jalkh, Benedek Jávor, Karin Kadenbach, Urszula Krupa, Giovanni La Via, Jo Leinen, Peter Liese, Valentinas Mazuronis, Susanne Melior, Miroslav Mikolášik, Rory Palmer, Massimo Paolucci, Bolesław G. Piecha, John Procter, Julia Reid, Michèle Rivasi, Davor Škrlec, Renate Sommer, Ivica Tolić, Adina-Ioana Vălean, Damiano Zoffoli
Substitutes present for the final vote	Herbert Dorfmann, Fredrick Federley, Christophe Hansen, Babette Winter, Carlos Zorrinho
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	José Blanco López, Andor Deli