

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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*Session document*

9 March 2000

B5-0237/2000

## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

further to the Commission statement

pursuant to Rule 37(2) of the Rules of Procedure

by the following Members: Flautre, Jonckheer, Schroeder, Bouwman, Evans, Hudghton and Lambert

on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

on the extraordinary European Council in Lisbon on employment, economic reform and social cohesion

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**B5-0237/2000**

**Resolution on the extraordinary European Council in Lisbon on employment, economic reform and social cohesion**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment (COM(95)0700),
- having regard to the (Rocard) report on reduction of working hours (A4-0207/96),
- having regard to the final report (1997) of the High-Level Expert Group on the social and societal aspects of the information society "A European information society for all",

***Coordinating efforts for full employment***

1. Welcomes the Presidency's proposal for the forthcoming Lisbon summit to achieve full employment by the middle of the decade as the EU's central goal; urges the Commission, however, to monitor closely the quality of jobs provided;
2. Calls upon the Lisbon summit to adopt clear and quantified targets for the reduction of unemployment; urges the Council to acknowledge that growth alone will not be able to create the necessary jobs to overcome unemployment and that a coordinated strategy by the Member States to shorten average working hours is needed to make full employment a reality;
3. Supports action to strengthen the "third sector" in the social and welfare economy as a source of new appropriate and socially protected jobs, e.g. in the areas of social, ecological and cultural services;
4. Approves the new strategic objective as defined by the Portuguese Presidency document, which states that Europe must develop as a civilisation whose economic and social prosperity is based on valuing skills, cultural diversity and cohesion, and which plays an active part in promoting a more balanced and more peaceful world order based on solidarity (Council of the European Union document of 12 January 2000);
5. Approves the priority being given to stepping up the fight against exclusion, but regrets that the Presidency did not present any practical proposals regarding how to achieve a socially inclusive society and how to guarantee the sustainability of social protection schemes; emphasises the need to maintain and enlarge social protection schemes based on solidarity between the generations and between the rich and the poor;

6. Shares the Presidency's view regarding the need for a policy mix to combat social exclusion and new strategies to involve European citizens more closely in order "to forge a specific European identity"; approves the objective of gradually developing a European public area and the proposal to set up a high-level forum, but calls for NGOs to be involved, from its inception in June, as vital players in the European civil society that is in the process of emerging;
7. Strongly criticises the fact that sustainable development is not mentioned at all in the strategic goals of the Council; notes that economic policy strategies to foster growth have to take into account the commitments entered into by the EU in the Kyoto protocol;
8. Considers that the regional level is particularly suitable for developing new employment strategies; calls, therefore, for the regional dimension to be included to a greater extent in all European measures to combat unemployment;

#### ***Renewing the European social model***

9. Welcomes the Presidency's commitment to combating poverty and social exclusion in both their old and new forms, and to eradicating child poverty by 2010;
10. Calls on the Council to implement a European social inclusion strategy, along the same lines as the existing employment strategy, with guidelines and national action plans and the mainstreaming of social inclusion into all policies, including economic policy;
11. Calls on the Union and the Member States to make the promotion of social inclusion a priority and to draw up, on the basis of national action plans, concrete goals and procedures to coordinate the fight against social exclusion and poverty in all its forms;
12. Calls on the Council to set the objective of guaranteeing all European citizens a minimum income to ensure their independence and right to a living wage;

#### ***Towards a knowledge-based society***

13. Recalls the conclusions of the High-Level Expert Group, to the effect that full economic success for the information society presupposes that it is driven by the real needs of citizens, and not by the demands of market forces and high-technology industries alone;
14. Calls on the Council to encourage and promote (promotion including support by public funding) innovations in products and services, with the dual aim of improving the quality of life for everyone (with regard to public transport, tourism, the environment, public administration, health and services for the elderly) and creating local jobs;

15. Calls on the Council to draw up an ambitious plan for continuing vocational training, mobilising existing physical resources, setting up certified programmes and getting existing community bodies involved in the provision of public services, in order to spread familiarity with new information and communications technologies to all population groups;
16. Calls on the Council to redefine the universal telecommunications service so that this includes the right of access to the Internet for all and so that it is able, as a result of technical modernisation and appropriate pricing structures, to ensure that everyone in Europe has on-line access as swiftly as possible;
17. Urges the Council, with a view to developing citizen participation, to promote the right to use Internet and intranet networks belonging to firms, local communities and public places (information for workers, users and consumers);
18. Proposes that social negotiations be initiated regarding the impact of the development of new information and communications technologies on health, working conditions, the rules governing employment, employment contracts and the individual freedoms and monitoring of workers;

### *Economic reforms*

19. Supports further development of the broad economic policy guidelines, which should be more closely linked to the employment guidelines; urges the Council, given the importance of the BEPG, to involve Parliament more substantially in their drafting; calls for this document to be adopted under the codecision procedure;
20. Welcomes the Presidency's acknowledgement that harmful tax competition must be overcome and that taxation systems need to be made more friendly to employment and social cohesion; asks, however, for a more concrete indication of which actions are to be undertaken and reminds the Presidency that a decisive shift of the tax burden from labour to (non-renewable) energy consumption and environmental degradation has proved to be the right way to foster innovation and create employment;
21. Considers the approval of the Monti tax package as well as the energy taxation proposal by the Commission (as amended by Parliament) as a crucial step towards improving the functioning of the internal market, ensuring fair taxation and enabling Member States to ease the tax burden on labour; emphasises that taxation issues should be dealt with under the codecision procedure, in particular regarding environmental taxation;
22. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the European Council, the Council, the Commission and the parliaments of the Member States.