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B5-0331/2000

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to the Commission statement

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

by the following Members: Ilda Figueiredo, Sylviane Ainardi, Salvador Jové Peres, Ioannis Theonas, Armando Cossutta and Mihail Papayannakis

on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

on the outcome of the extraordinary European Council meeting held in Lisbon on 23 and 24 March 2000

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Resolution on the outcome of the extraordinary European Council meeting held in Lisbon on 23 and 24 March 2000

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the conclusions of the extraordinary European Council meeting devoted to employment held on 23 and 24 March 2000 in Lisbon,
- 1. Calls for the current thinking behind the development of the ‘new economy’ to be reversed in order to meet the aspirations of ordinary people and the need for jobs, since the ‘new economy’ must be based on an improvement in the living and working conditions of wage-earners, the provision of training for all, increased investment in research, and the democratisation of the new technologies;
- 2. Deplores the fact that the European Summit, which was supposed to define a European strategy to create jobs, constituted an element of liberal trend based on the deregulation of labour, the dismantling of social security protection and the acceleration of the liberalisation process;
- 3. Notes the objective seeking a 70% employment rate by 2010 but deplores the fact that the quantified objectives for unemployment and poverty rates were abandoned;
- 4. Deplores, in particular, the fact that quantified, binding and verifiable objectives were not adopted, since they would have enabled the implementation of the commitments given by the Member States concerning the fight against unemployment to be measured; calls for those objectives to be enshrined in the future ‘European Social Agenda’;
- 5. Takes the view that the growth objectives must form part of a new type of sustainable and non-inflationary development which creates jobs;
- 6. Regrets the fact that the major emphasis was placed on economic reforms with a view to the completion of the single market instead of on the defence and promotion of acquired social rights;
- 7. Is concerned at the priority given to the strengthening of the competitiveness of undertakings by means of a reduction in wage costs and labour flexibility;
- 8. Is opposed to the acceleration of ‘liberalisation in areas such as gas, electricity, postal services and transport’, and is in favour of the promotion of the public services in order to create jobs, respond to users’ needs and protect the most vulnerable sectors of society;
- 9. Repeats its request to the Commission that it draw up a study into the effects that liberalisation will have on jobs, working conditions and regional planning;

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10. Notes that no reference was made in Lisbon to a reduction in working hours; calls on the Council and Commission to initiate a process designed to reduce working hours, with no reduction in salary or flexibility obligation;
11. Deplores the fact that no decision was taken to combat mergers and/or concentrations of undertakings or their relocation, developments which have a serious impact on jobs and regional planning; calls for the revision of the directives on European works councils and collective redundancies so that the rights and powers of wage-earners and their trade union organisations are strengthened; would like to see a 'Monitoring Centre for Industrial Change' established;
12. Notes the proposal to create 'an information society for all'; calls for special attention to be paid to training for women, the disabled, the elderly and persons with a low level of education and for free internet access to be provided in educational establishments and libraries;
13. Notes the beginning of a general reflection on the future objectives of education systems; expects that the Council and Commission will take specific measures geared to the acquisition of the skills required for the exercise of a profession and to high-quality lifelong training which will enable people to get a job;
14. Is concerned by the measures envisaged to 'modernise social protection', with particular regard to the concept of 'an active welfare state to ensure that work pays';
15. Is opposed, in particular, to any attempt to make social security and unemployment benefits subject to specific conditions; is in favour of an increase in minimum social security benefits, the establishment of a minimum wage in all the Member States and greater efforts to combat poverty, especially child poverty;
16. Is in favour of the maintenance of a high level of social security protection which is based on solidarity and is independent of commercial interests and financial return;
17. Notes the announced intention to promote equality between the sexes but regrets the fact that the proposals were not adopted which sought to reconcile more effectively family and working life; expects that the Council and Commission will take specific measures to integrate gender-equality in all Community policies and to strengthen programmes designed to ensure gender-equality, in particular with a view to ensuring more effective reconciliation between family and working life;
18. Notes the proposal concerning the drawing up of a 'European Charter for Small Companies'; expects that the Council and Commission will improve support mechanisms, especially the fiscal and financial mechanisms;
19. Notes the measures proposed for the creation of a 'European Area of Research and Innovation'; hopes that research will be directed towards sustainable development and

that research activities at national and Community level will be coordinated more effectively, with greater account being taken of research workers' opinions;

20. Notes that no decision was taken to combat tax havens and speculative capital movements; calls on the Council and Commission to introduce a tax on speculative capital movements (Tobin Tax), since that might help to curb speculation without penalising genuine business activities and would enable new resources to be released for investment in health, education and environmental development;
21. Takes the view that the involvement of all the social partners is essential if unemployment and social exclusion are to be successfully combated; expects that the Portuguese Presidency will convene the Forum consisting of representatives of the European institutions, governments and trade union movements;
22. Notes that an agreement on a 'European Social Agenda' is being drawn up for the European Council meeting in December 2000; expects that the French Presidency will contribute to decisions seeking to reverse the liberal guidelines applied hitherto and to redirect European integration towards a social Europe based on progress, peace and security;
23. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and to the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.