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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to the Commission statement

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

by Flautre, Jonckheer, Ilka Schroeder, Jillian Evans, Lambert, Hudghton and Nogueira Román

on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

on the outcome of the Lisbon European Council of 23 and 24 March 2000:
Presidency conclusions

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**Resolution on the outcome of the Lisbon European Council of 23 and 24 March 2000:
Presidency conclusions**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Presidency Conclusions of the Lisbon European Council of 23 and 24 March 2000 on employment, economic reform and social cohesion,
 - having regard to the European Parliament resolution on the communication from the Commission on a concerted strategy for modernising social protection (COM(1999) 347),
 - having regard to the conclusions of the Labour and Social Affairs Council of 29 November 1999 on cooperation with a view to modernising social protection,
 - having regard to the Community Charter on the Fundamental Rights of Workers,
 - having regard to its resolution of 18 November 1998 on the Commission communication on a social action programme 1998-2000,
 - whereas our societies and economy suffer from high levels of joblessness, with 15 million Europeans registered as unemployed,
 - whereas more than 52 million people in Europe live below the poverty line,
 - whereas the eradication of unemployment and poverty can be achieved only by an appropriate mix of economic, monetary, social and innovation policies, together with a participation-based strategy involving citizens, business, and social partners,
 - whereas the spread of new information and communication technologies across our societies will not only change the world of work but will have a profound impact on citizens' daily lives and social organisation,
1. Regrets that the approach set out in the conclusions is principally intergovernmental, the European Council being pre-eminent and the objectives laid down decentralised as much as possible, with a consequent lack of due respect for the role of the European institutions, in particular the European Parliament, the only European institution directly elected by its citizens ;
 2. Welcomes the Council's proposal to achieve full employment as the EU's central goal; insists on putting employment and social policy initiatives on a equal footing with economic policy instruments; calls, in particular, for a reassessment of the convergence and stability criteria, which are biased towards budgetary consolidation and a mechanical concept of price stability without due differentiation between the nature and

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fields of public spending and without acknowledging the crucial role that low interest rates are playing for investment and job-creation;

3. Takes the view that a reduction in working time is an essential instrument if the objective of full employment is to be attained, all the more so since the extremely widespread use of information technologies implies changes to working time and will result in changes to the social organisation of production and consumption and of living patterns in general;
4. Regrets the fact that the Lisbon conclusions made no reference to the connection between of the creation and destruction of jobs, with the spread of electronic commerce threatening jobs in certain sectors such as distribution;
5. Calls in this context for the strengthening of the 'third sector', which includes the cooperative sector, as well as initiatives concerning social, ecological, and cultural services; believes that this sector has great potential for creating meaningful jobs and increasing the quality of life of individual citizens;
6. Welcomes the Council's conclusion that an appropriate macroeconomic policy mix is needed for sustaining the healthy economic outlook; deplores, however, the fact, that the document does not give any indication which macroeconomic instruments should be applied;
7. Criticises the Council for failing to address the question of environmental taxation, which could ease taxes on labour and redirect investment into more environmentally sustainable fields;
8. Criticises the Council's failure to refer to the eminent role of sustainable development laid down in Article 6 of the EC Treaty; is convinced that this concept must be part of any economic strategy, since it fosters innovation and is vital to the general quality of life;
9. Welcomes the Council's statement that the completion of the internal market needs a swift agreement by the Council on the pending 'Monti' tax package; is, however, disappointed that no binding conclusions are drawn from the statement and that no timetable is given for further steps to fight harmful tax competition within the Union;
10. Reiterates its view that close coordination of tax policies is necessary for the sound development of the internal market and the EU as a whole; considers that the introduction of qualified majority voting on tax issues, which should be subject to the codecision procedure, is necessary to overcome current and future attempts to block tax proposals in the Council;

11. Takes the view, however, that the use of information technologies provides a number of opportunities with regard to worker consultation in undertakings, to taxation, to universal service, to the development of non-commercial applications in the fields of education, health and culture; calls on the Commission to submit legislative proposals on these various topics;
12. Welcomes the Council's commitment to put enhanced social cohesion and improved quality of work high on its priority list; calls on the Council to instruct the Commission to develop a benchmark system for social cohesion and quality of work as soon as possible, the results of which should form part of the annual assessment of EU policies;
13. Welcomes the proposal to establish a High-Level Working Party on Social Protection in June 2000; urges the Member States to ensure that women are fairly represented on this body; calls for NGOs to be involved in this Forum as soon as it is set up; looks forward to the interim report to be presented to the Feira European Council in June 2000;
14. Asks the Council to initiate the process for a common strategy to combat poverty and social exclusion, backed up by an action programme and a legislative programme based on Article 137 of the EC Treaty;
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the European Council, the Commission and the parliaments of the Member States.