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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to the European Council report and Commission statement

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

by Gerard Collins, Cristiana Muscardini, Luís Queiró, José Ribeiro e Castro
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on behalf of the UEN Group

on the outcome of the European Council, Stockholm, 23-24 March 2001 – (1)

European Parliament resolution on the outcome of the European Council, Stockholm, 23-24 March 2001 – (1)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the outcome of the European Council held in Stockholm on 23-24 March 2001, which focused on modernising the European model and attaining the Union's strategic goal decided at Lisbon for the next decade: *how to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion,*
- A. whereas the Stockholm European Council is the first Annual Spring Meeting on economic and social questions,

ECONOMIC ASPECTS

1. Recalls the primary necessity of SMEs in the economic fabric of the Member States; is pleased, accordingly, with the willingness shown by the European Council to encourage entrepreneurial spirit in the European Union;
2. Considers that the structural reforms necessary for the development of the entrepreneurial spirit in the European Union must not call into question the place and the operation of services of general interest in the Member States; underlines, in this respect, that public services constitute essential elements of the economic, legal and cultural heritage of certain Member States; stresses that a liberalisation process not regulated by the competent national authorities and not controlled by the citizens of the Member States will necessarily lead to the creation of new monopolies on the markets under consideration;
3. Recognises the cogency of the request formulated by the European Council concerning the transposition of the directives on the internal market in relation to national legal orders; stresses, however, that the transposition measures must respect the constitutional traditions and the values of the Member States;
4. Considers that there is no need to rush the opening of the gas and electricity markets; urges the Commission to take account of the fact that these sectors of activity often constitute services of the utmost importance in the Member States; recalls that in the sectors where the liberalisation process has already started, as in the postal services, national authorities must ensure that the requirements of the universal public service are completely guaranteed;
5. Considers, in particular, with respect to the amount of investment necessary that the aims set out in Lisbon cannot be achieved only by private operators; deems it essential, therefore, to recognise the decisive role of the national public services in this process;
6. Considers that the transition to a knowledge-based economy must take place with full

respect for the prerogatives of the Member States of the European Union; with this in mind, considers that all the initiatives of the Commission, and more generally, the Community Institutions, in this field will have to scrupulously respect the distribution of competencies between the European Community and the Member States; recalls in this respect that education remains a strictly national field of competence;

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL MEASURES

7. Is deeply concerned that 14 million people are still unemployed in the European Union, but warmly welcomes the announcement of the creation of 2.5 million new jobs in the EU of which more than two thirds were taken up by women; calls, however, for attention to be paid to the need to take equivalent measures for people with disabilities and people approaching the end of their 'traditional' working life;
8. Considers that the intermediate targets established for employment rates for 2005 for the Union as a whole at the Stockholm European Council could reduce the Member States' margin of manoeuvre in achieving the strategic goals;
9. Stresses that the remaining social conclusions defined in Lisbon, such as investment in human resources, Internet access for all, life-long learning and social inclusion, are still retained in the plan of the targets to be attained;
10. Welcomes the position taken on workers' mobility, especially the creation of a single site with information about mobility in Europe, in particular providing the national employment services with a Europe-wide database on jobs, curricula vitae and learning opportunities;
11. Agrees with the recognition of the need for more flexible organisation of labour markets permitting better reconciliation of working and personal life;
12. Given that the percentage of the working-age population will begin to decrease in 2010, expects due attention to be paid to the demographic question, starting this year with these factors being reflected particularly in pensions, social security, education systems, re-training for middle-aged people and family policies in the Member States;
13. Stresses the importance of forward planning for proper state-financed pension schemes;
14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the Member States.