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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to the Council and Commission statements

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

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on behalf of the PSE Group

on the preparation of the Laeken European Council of 14-15 December 2001

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European Parliament resolution on the preparation of the Laeken European Council of 14-15 December 2001

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Council and Commission statements on the preparation of the Laeken European Council of 14-15 December 2001,
- having regard to the Leinen/Mendez de Vigo Report on the future of the European Union and the Kaufmann Report on European governance,
- having regard to the deadlines and objectives set by the European Council in Vienna and Tampere, as well as by the Treaty of Amsterdam, for the creation of an area of freedom, security and justice,
- having regard to the EU terrorism roadmap, drafted as a response to the recent terrorist attacks, as well as the conclusions of the Brussels European Council of 21 September 2001, the Ghent European Council of 19 October 2001 and its resolutions on these summits adopted on 4 October and 25 October 2001,
- having regard to its recommendation on criminal sanctions and Community law, adopted on 15 November 2001,
- having regard to its resolution which will wind up the debate on Mr Rocard's oral questions to the Council and Commission on promoting quality in employment policy and social policy,

Foreign Affairs

Fight against terrorism and the situation in Afghanistan

1. Welcomes the recent developments on the ground in Afghanistan in the fight against terrorism and the Taliban regime and considers that it remains indispensable to attain the objective of destroying the al-Qa'ida terrorist network and capturing its leaders;
2. Considers it essential that a transitional government, made up of representatives of all Afghan groupings, explicitly including local civil organisations, in particular women's organisations, and respecting human rights and international humanitarian law, be constituted in Afghanistan; welcomes the meeting that is to be held in Berlin under the aegis of the United Nations;
3. Demands that full support be given to the United Nations in its search for solutions and necessary means;
4. Welcomes the humanitarian aid by ECHO and calls on the Council to immediately provide, in cooperation with the UN agencies, necessary humanitarian aid to populations

inside Afghanistan as well as to the thousands of refugees in neighbouring countries, and also to make proposals for the undertaking of a plan for the reconstruction of the country according to the guidelines defined by the Ghent European Council; calls on the Council, acting on a proposal by the Commission, to propose adequate appropriations in the budget for 2002;

5. Expresses its compassion to the families of the journalists who have lost their lives in the course of duty in Afghanistan, whose work was a courageous testimony to the situation on the ground;

Middle East

6. Reaffirms its appeal to Israelis and Palestinians to immediately reopen negotiations on the basis of all the agreements previously signed by both parties; in this respect, considers indispensable the application of the recommendations of the Mitchell report, without any delay or conditions;
7. Welcomes the recent proposals by US President Bush and Secretary of State Powell for a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and considers that the best conditions now exist for a joint EU-US initiative in the region;
8. Regrets strongly declarations made by Israeli Prime Minister Sharon on the occasion of the visit by the EU Troika in the region and calls on the Council and the Commission to pursue their initiatives in the political and diplomatic fields to restart the peace process according to the principles of the Madrid Conference;
9. Considers it essential to continue to provide assistance to Palestinian populations affected by an extremely serious economic and social situation;

The Balkans

10. Welcomes the peaceful and orderly elections in Kosovo and in particular the participation of all groups of the population; calls on Ibrahim Rugova and his Democratic League of Kosovo to seek the broadest possible coalition representing the interests of all sections of the Kosovo population;
11. Calls on the Commission, Council and Member States to maintain their strong commitment in the Balkans, including via the Stability Pact, in order to guarantee a long-term pacific development and a pacification of continuing tensions between the different groups within the population; encourages all Balkan countries to foster cooperation in the region as a guarantee of positive economic, political and social development of the whole of the Balkans;
12. Welcomes the constitutional changes adopted by the Macedonian Parliament giving minority ethnic Albanians more rights, ending weeks of uncertainty in the troubled Balkan nation; expresses its preoccupation that, despite the breakthrough, the situation remains tense in the city of Tetovo and calls on all parties, in particular the ethnic Albanian militants, to respect the agreement;

European security and defence policy (ESDP)

13. Takes note of the results of the 'capability improvement conference' following the meeting of the Member States' Defence Ministers on 19 November and asks Member States to enhance their activities in order to enable the setting-up of the Rapid Reaction Force in early 2003;
14. Requests the Council to conclude all processes and negotiations with NATO prior to the Laeken Summit, in order to ensure an efficient launch of the new European policy for security and defence of the Union;

Justice and home affairs

15. Considers that the Laeken European Council should be able to make an objective mid-term assessment of the progress made in the AFSJ, tackling the difficulties and submitting a convincing programme for the implementation of Tampere;
16. Considers that the Commission's scoreboard and the report presented by the Presidency shows the lack of progress made in the AFSJ and that the mid-term Treaty objectives and timetable were not met, due mainly to the unanimity requirement in the Council and to the lack of political commitment of Member States;
17. Calls on the Laeken European Council to clearly and unequivocally confirm the importance of an area of freedom, security and justice and its will to accomplish the Tampere project and timetable in a coherent, clear and transparent way; asks the European Council, therefore, to provide political guidance and outline policies with a view to guaranteeing the establishment of a real AFSJ:
 - by the transfer, pursuant to Article 42 of the TEU and to the codecision procedure, of competence for all areas of action defined in Article 29 or, at least, of competence for measures in the field of judicial cooperation in criminal matters with cross-border implications within the European Union, as well as for all measures concerning fundamental rights and citizenship in the EU;
 - by integrating Europol into the institutional framework of the Union, thus guaranteeing its judicial and democratic control, and the development of arrangements for cooperation with Eurojust;
 - by ensuring full jurisdiction for the Court of Justice over all measures relating to the creation of the AFSJ;
 - by asking the Council to submit comprehensive and coherent initiatives and precise timetables, to rationalise its working methods, to develop better cooperation with the European Parliament and the Commission and to speed up the adoption of all blocked decisions;
18. Calls on the Council to ensure the adoption of legislative proposals on the fight against terrorism for a European arrest warrant, a common definition of terrorism and the setting-up of Europol and of joint investigation teams and to implement the measures proposed at the Brussels and Ghent European Councils;

19. Calls on the Council to develop a coherent external strategy in the area of Justice and Home Affairs in accordance with clearly defined priorities;
20. Acknowledging that no Member State alone can address the challenges regarding asylum and immigration, calls on the Laeken Summit:
 - to make further progress with the development of a common European asylum policy based on high protection requirements and a strong political commitment in order to adopt all the instruments blocked in the Council;
 - while proposing tough action to combat illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings, to also provide political guidance and outline approaches for constructive immigration policies to develop a common policy on labour admission;

Social and economic affairs

21. Recalls the commitments agreed at the Lisbon and Stockholm Summits with a view to a substantial rise in the EU employment rate; considers equally important an improvement in the quality of employment and effective implementation of the New European Social Agenda, as conditions for fulfilling the Lisbon objectives of a knowledge-based economy with more social cohesion and full employment: expects the Summit therefore to agree on a first set of quality indicators based on the recent Commission proposal and to consider them an integral part of the Employment Guidelines for 2002;
22. Calls on the European Council and the Commission to ensure that employment-policy and social-protection objectives are taken properly into account in preparations for the Spring Council in Barcelona and in the summary report; urges that the Employment and Social Affairs Council be fully involved in this process;
23. Calls on the Council to endorse the social inclusion indicators agreed upon by the Committee on Social Protection, in order to support and complete the open method of coordination in this field and to take into account the multi-dimensional aspect of social exclusion; insists that the EP's involvement in the open method of coordination in general must be recognised; the Commission should continue to play a key role notably in the elaboration of the joint inclusion report;
24. Points out that it is essential to build an increasingly broad common base in Europe which safeguards sustainable and universal pension schemes, based upon the concept of solidarity and social cohesion; calls on the Council to agree on an open method of coordination in this field, based on commonly agreed social objectives, and follow-up instruments such as indicators, and to gradually extend it to social protection in general; calls for a more balanced and integrated approach to questions related to pensions at the EU level and for priority to be given to their social and universal purpose, and insists in particular on a more active role for the Employment Council and the Committee on Social Protection in formulating the annual broad economic guidelines;

25. Regrets, despite the efforts by the Presidency, the present lack of progress in the Council on important social proposals undergoing conciliation (such as employees' information and consultation or working time in the road transport sector), and calls on the Council to deliver substantial results taking full account of Parliament's role as co-legislator;
26. Welcomes the setting-up of an Observatory for industrial change and strongly supports the Presidency's efforts to ensure an active and social EU approach to restructuring; calls on the Council to give a mandate to the Commission to elaborate a more holistic and proactive approach to industrial change, which takes into greater account the employment and social implications of all EU policies, including those concerning competition and the internal market;
27. Considers that social dialogue should be fostered and strengthened as a key factor in meeting the social and labour market policy challenges facing Europe, but also as a key factor in the macro-economic dialogue to develop more positive interaction between economic, social and employment policies; expects the social partners to be involved on a structural basis in the preparation of the Spring Summit; considers that social partners have an important responsibility to intervene through European and national negotiations in key areas such as organisation of work, life-long learning and the new, 'atypical' forms of work; expects the Commission, nevertheless, to urgently propose legislative instruments in case of failure in the negotiations, as is the case for 'employment agencies'.
28. Welcomes the fact that the Belgian Presidency has developed indicators for wage disparities between men and women performing equal work and indicators for the quality of employment;
29. Calls for these indicators to be incorporated in the Luxembourg process (2002 employment package) and for the Commission to submit a proposal for legislation on equal pay for men and women performing work of equal value;
30. Calls on the Council to take concrete action according to the opinion strongly expressed by the European Parliament concerning 'support vis-à-vis the Commission [for] its proposal for a framework directive on the objectives and organisational arrangements of services of general interest based on Article 95 of the Treaty; this directive should create a legal framework which guarantees the availability of services of general interest to the public';
31. Stresses the importance of a final, in-depth assessment of the current state of play a few weeks before the changeover to the euro, whose success will have a direct impact on the credibility of the EU institutions as a result of the degree of citizens' confidence;
32. Welcomes the various information and communication campaigns and the smooth progress of the frontloading and sub-frontloading operations, emphasising the need for possible additional measures to encourage retailers to be sub-frontloaded;

33. Welcomes the encouraging results of recent surveys into how prepared SMEs are for the introduction of the euro as a cash reality;
34. Calls on the Council to ask the Commission to take prompt action against financial institutions which fail to apply EU rules on cross-border credit transfers by imposing high fees for these cross-border payments;

Enlargement

35. Reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that the citizens of as many countries as possible are able to participate in the 2004 European Parliament elections, but also that there should be no backtracking from the conditions which have been set out;
36. Insists in particular that the adoption of the *acquis* and compliance with the Copenhagen economic criteria, including the existence of a functioning market economy and the capacity to withstand competitive pressure and market forces within the Union must be assessed objectively and factually and must be achieved before accession;
37. Reiterates its support for the conclusion of the Helsinki European Council of 10 and 11 December 1999 that although a political settlement will facilitate the accession of Cyprus to the European Union, reaching a settlement by the completion of negotiations is not a precondition for accession;
38. Reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that no country should be able to hold the negotiations hostage, and condemns recent statements by Turkish ministers that Turkey may annex the occupied north of the island if Cyprus accedes to the Union before a political settlement is reached;
39. Considers that taking account of the social dimension and employment is an absolute priority in preparations for enlargement; calls on the applicant countries to be prepared to participate fully in the new open methods of coordination; calls for particular attention to the establishment of stable structures for social dialogue and the encouragement of community movements and organisations;
40. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the European Council.