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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

by Nicholas Clegg and Dirk Sterckx

on behalf of the ELDR Group

on the outcome of the European Council of 15-16 March 2002 in Barcelona

European Parliament resolution on the outcome of the European Council of 15-16 March 2002 in Barcelona

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Presidency Conclusions of the European Council in Barcelona on 15-16 March 2002 and annexes,
 - having regard to its previous resolution on the subject,
1. Welcomes the enhanced role played by the President of the European Parliament, Pat Cox, and hopes that this new political and pragmatic dialogue will extend to all relevant policy fields;
 2. Considers that Parliament has shown the will to deliver the necessary decisions in the co-legislative process, and that it is now up to the Council to further the process, not least through a reform of the Council's working methods;
 3. Welcomes the report by Javier Solana on the reform of the Council, but considers that these reforms are overdue and a proposal for change should be adopted at the latest in Seville;
 4. Considers that there is an increased tendency to inflate the goals to be reached from summit to summit and that the emphasis must be on real and attainable goals to further economic growth in Europe;
 5. Considers that statistical indicators and benchmarking can be useful tools in the campaign to increase European dynamism, but is concerned that the European Council tends to call for more statistics and reports instead of taking concrete action;
 6. Welcomes the agreement reached in the energy sector and looks forward to the Council's reaction to the European Parliament's first reading concerning the opening of the electricity and gas market; however, deeply regrets that no decision was taken on setting a date for the opening of the energy market to domestic customers;
 7. Welcomes the Council's decision to finally proceed with the Galileo project, which will promote the technological competitiveness and enhance the independence of the EU in satellite communication;
 8. Notes that the Barcelona summit was the first of a series of annual assessments of EU progress towards sustainable development, as decided at the 2001 Göteborg Council;
 9. Welcomes the reconfirmation of the objective of ratifying Kyoto before the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg but regrets that no new decisions were taken as regards integrating environmental policy into the economic and social policy agendas;

10. Notes the commitment of the European Council to reach an agreement between Council and Parliament on seven proposed directives in the Financial Services Action Plan in 2002, but regrets the persistent failure of the Council to reach a common position on the Directive on Occupational Pension Funds;
11. Endorses the appeal of the European Council to Member States to reduce the overall tax burden on low-wage labour where it has a diminishing effect on the employment rate, and to develop policies to shift taxation away from jobs and incomes;
12. Welcomes the European Council's first step to discourage early retirement and to increase opportunities for older workers to remain in the labour market; calls on Member States to accelerate the modernisation of pension systems and to improve access to occupational pension schemes; stresses that the European Union can help guarantee safe and financially sustainable pensions via the open coordination method;
13. Stresses that employability must be enhanced by a greater and more innovative investment in research, education, training and life-long learning and by the full and mutual recognition of academic and vocational qualifications, and calls on the Member States to transform their education and vocational training systems so as to meet the demand for skilled staff in sectors with a promising future and the necessity of striving for gender equality;
14. Insists that the European Union's policies should complement Member States' efforts to promote competitiveness and create employment through the completion of the internal market, by enhancing labour market mobility through improved mutual recognition and through portability of pensions, insurance and social security benefits;
15. Welcomes the recognition of the importance of child care in encouraging female labour force participation, but warns against ill-justified EU initiatives in this area, where action from Member States themselves is most urgently required;
16. Welcomes the Council's commitment to complete work on liberalisation of port services and the establishment of a legal framework for the award of public transport contracts by the end of this year;
17. Welcomes the level of priority accorded by the Council to Community accession to Eurocontrol in the context of the creation of a Single European Sky; points out that the Commission's Single Sky proposals constitute a coherent package which must be developed as an integrated whole;
18. In the context of its forthcoming discussions on the Commission's current proposal to revise the rules for the allocation of air slots, urges an acceleration in the development of a more market-based approach to slot allocation;
19. Insists that a new interinstitutional initiative applying thorough Regulatory Impact Assessment to all new draft EU legislation and to significant parliamentary and Council amendments be established as a matter of urgency, so that the impact of EU legislation can be properly assessed;

MIDDLE EAST

20. Expresses its profound sadness and consternation at the continuing human tragedy experienced by the Israeli and Palestinian peoples;
21. Welcomes the Barcelona Declaration on the Middle East adopted by the Council and the strong EU commitment to contribute to a peaceful solution of the conflict in close cooperation with the United States, Russia and the United Nations;
22. Underlines that the Barcelona Declaration sets the framework for EU policy in the area and urges the Israeli and Palestinian authorities to cooperate in the implementation of such a recommendation;
23. Urges therefore the Israeli and Palestinian authorities to move to a new phase of the conflict by accepting international observers, starting fresh negotiations on the basis of UNSC resolution 1397 and of the recent Saudi Arabian initiative and combating terrorism and indiscriminate violence against civilians;
24. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, Commission, the governments of the Member States and the governments of the applicant countries.