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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 Charles Pasqua, Brian Crowley and Nello Musumeci

on behalf of the UEN Group

on preparations for the spring summit in Brussels on 21 and 22 March 2003

**B5-0119/2003**

**European Parliament resolution on preparations for the spring summit in Brussels on 21 and 22 March 2003**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the conclusions of the European Council of 23 and 24 March 2000 in Lisbon,
  - having regard to the conclusions of the Göteborg European Council in 2001,
  - having regard to the conclusions of the Barcelona European Council in 2002,
  - having regard to the European Charter for Small Enterprises,
- A. whereas the European Council meeting on 23 and 24 March 2000 established the strategic goal of making the EU 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,
- B. whereas it was decided to hold a European Council meeting each spring to define appropriate mandates and ensure their follow-up,
- C. whereas the Barcelona spring Council meeting focused on efforts to coordinate economic policies, the need for sustainable development, entrepreneurship and competitiveness, employment and social cohesion, linking up European markets, research and cutting-edge technologies,
- D. whereas the Council meetings scheduled for the period January to March 2003 will cover other important issues on the Lisbon agenda, ranging from financial affairs to the environment, transport, telecommunications, education, youth and culture,
- E. whereas the Greek Presidency has set six priorities for the Lisbon process: entrepreneurship and small businesses, the European knowledge-based economy, more and better jobs, solidarity and strengthening social cohesion, safeguarding future prosperity and quality of life,
- F. whereas the knowledge-based economy, which relies on innovation and creativity, presupposes, by definition, the existence of a market economy based on free competition and respect for individual initiative,
- G. whereas the strengthening of the market economy in the European Union is not incompatible with the existence of services of general interest in the Member States,
- H. whereas the transition to a knowledge-based economy and society presupposes the introduction of better policies for the information society and R&D, stepping up the

process of sectoral reform geared to competitiveness and innovation and completing the internal market,

- I. whereas it is necessary, more specifically, to encourage the development of research into cutting-edge technologies (such as biotechnology, space research), which automatically implies greater financial investment,
  - J. whereas progress has already been achieved in coordinating economic policies,
  - K. whereas the structural reforms already introduced in the Member States are now at an advanced stage,
  - L. whereas Europe has a deficit to make up in terms of entrepreneurship, particularly in high-tech sectors,
  - M. whereas 2003 has been designated European Year of People with Disabilities, which merits the particular attention of the forthcoming spring Council,
  - N. whereas the Council has also called for the Lisbon strategy to be consolidated and simplified and targeted at the level of employment, and the time frame aligned with the Lisbon deadline for full employment, i.e. 2010,
  - O. whereas the conclusions of the Lisbon summit gave social objectives a high profile and the Barcelona Council focused on people at risk of poverty and social exclusion and charged the 2003 spring Council to ensure secure and sustainable pensions and a system of health care for the elderly,
  - P. whereas the social partners have reached agreement on a work programme for 2003-2005 based on three main priorities: employment, mobility and enlargement; whereas it is essential that the new European employment strategy should be simplified and the role of the social partners strengthened, with the aim of achieving the objectives and significantly reducing the list of main guidelines,
1. Welcomes the fact that, three years after its adoption and one-third of the way towards the 2010 target, many of the objectives have been achieved, in particular mobilising and supporting Europe's efforts towards economic and social reform; recognises, however, that there is still a backlog in implementation to be resolved in certain areas, some of which have been identified by the Greek Presidency; reaffirms that if the 15 million jobs required for Europe to achieve the Lisbon objectives are to be created before 2010, it will be necessary to embark on reform of the labour market, by promoting various forms of flexible working;
  2. Underlines the vital importance of small and medium-sized businesses in the economic fabric of the Member States and therefore supports any initiatives likely to foster entrepreneurship in the European Union, in particular by cutting red tape for businesses, alleviating tax pressure and improving the standard of services provided by public administrations;

3. Applauds, in this context, the efforts made by a number of Member States to improve the standard of customer service provided by administrations and public services by introducing and developing information and communications technologies;
4. Considers, particularly with regard to the level of investment required, that the Lisbon objectives concerning the transition to a knowledge-based economy cannot be achieved by the private sector alone and that it is therefore important to recognise the decisive role played by national public authorities in this process;
5. Points out that, to create more and better jobs fostering social insertion and integration, it is necessary to strengthen Europe's competitiveness by removing excessive constraints, particularly in terms of red tape, taxation and wage costs; therefore calls on the Member States to introduce measures to reduce the barriers to undertakings entering the market by simplifying administrative procedures, improving access to capital, stepping up the creation of networks, and enhancing the level of skills and the quality of jobs in small businesses and encouraging entrepreneurship;
6. Calls on the Commission to implement speedily the Green Paper on entrepreneurship, by focusing on simplifying administrative procedures and on finding practical ways of improving access to expertise and capital for small businesses;
7. Recalls its commitment to the application of the European Charter for Small Enterprises;
8. Approves the measures to encourage the adoption of action programmes for financial services and venture capital;
9. Reiterates its support for the modernisation of Community competition law; the priority objectives of this reform should be to strengthen the culture of competition in the Member States and to heighten awareness among economic operators;
10. Calls on the European Commission, nonetheless, to take greater account of the interests of European industry when the monitoring concentrations, particularly in the knowledge economy;
11. Points out that for the 37 million disabled people in the EU, the European Year of People with Disabilities, is the most ambitious policy measure for equal rights for the disabled people and calls on the spring Council to ensure its success by adopting an ambitious programme to support their right to participate fully in society, at work and beyond, by ensuring that all forms of discrimination against disabled people at the workplace are outlawed and by committing the EU to directing its efforts towards achieving equal rights for the some 610 million disabled people in the world;
12. Underlines the central theme of the Lisbon strategy, that 'people are Europe's main asset and should be the focal point of the Union's policies' and, in this context, calls for policies to promote flexibility, investment in people, the enhancement of their capacities and knowledge, life-long learning, constant up-skilling of those in work or seeking jobs, and maintaining and improving the incentive to work; points out that a new European strategy for employment capable of meeting the new challenges presupposes changes in education

and training to ensure broader access to knowledge and the strengthening of links between school and industry;

13. Calls for continuous efforts to improve job opportunities for women, young people and older workers; calls for measures to make it easier to reconcile family life and working life, particularly for those people who take a career break to look after their children or an older dependent relative;
14. Considers that the development of a European employment strategy must create the necessary conditions for stable employment, better quality and productivity at work, the promotion of labour market cohesion allowing social inclusion, and must encourage the active participation of all the players involved and the social partners;
15. Welcomes the work programme agreed by the social partners and considers that it will make a positive contribution to the Lisbon strategy; draws attention to the fact that a substantial part of it is devoted to preparing for enlargement;
16. Recalls that the Barcelona European Council sought to enhance equal opportunities, by dealing with violence against women and improving childcare facilities, and calls on the forthcoming spring Summit to take stock of the progress achieved in these areas, particularly upgrading skills, measures to tackle illiteracy, training and continuous education;
17. Is convinced that it is essential for the future employment strategy to be based on medium-term employment expectations and economic trends, and on the need to maintain and enhance the incentive to work and improve the skills of those in work or seeking jobs, particularly in the IT sphere;
18. Calls on the Member States to improve coordination so as to consolidate the European Research Area, and to promote access to innovation and R&D for small and medium-sized businesses, in particular through technology skills networks;
19. Calls on the Member States to increase R&D funding by expanding the public facilities currently available, and above all by creating a tax and legal environment conducive to the provision of risk capital for innovative businesses;
20. Calls on the Member States to press ahead more rapidly with the GALILEO programme, taking care to include a secure signal for government applications;
21. Calls for the implementation of a global action plan to stem the crisis in the telecommunications sector, based on an approach that takes account of the specific characteristics of each Member State, and respecting the need to deliver a universal and non-discriminatory service in this sector;
22. Calls on the Member States to continue their efforts under the eEurope action plan and to develop m-commerce (using mobile telephony) by making the security of exchanges and transactions an absolute priority;

23. Considers that the move towards sustainable development requires powerful coordination mechanisms not only to ensure consistency in local decisions but also to create relays to coordinate local and global initiatives;
24. Calls on the European Council to ensure that the efforts made to promote the principle of sustainable development are integrated into all Union policies, and are continued and enhanced;
25. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.