

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

1999



2004

Session document

10 February 2003

B5-0133/2003

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to the Commission statement

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

by Sylviane H. Ainaridi, Hans Modrow, Salvador Jové Peres, Ilda Figueiredo, Herman Schmid, Armando Cossutta and Gérard Caudron

on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

on the crisis in the steel sector and the measures to be taken at Community level

European Parliament resolution on the crisis in the steel sector and the measures to be taken at Community level

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 127, 136 and 137 of the EC Treaty,
 - having regard to the European Social Charter and the Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on the steel sector and industrial restructuring and mergers,
- A. extremely concerned at the serious crisis in the steel industry, which will entail closure of numerous industrial sites, many of them in Germany, Belgium and France, and by the loss of thousands of jobs, for example in Arcelor, the European steel group which is the largest in the world today, (6 000 redundancies planned) and Metaleurop Nord (830 redundancies),
- B. whereas the steel industry has already in recent years suffered major cutbacks in production capacity and successive waves of job losses,
- C. whereas the crisis in the steel industry could be further aggravated by the accession of new steel-producing countries to the European Union,
- D. particularly shocked by the sudden decision by Péciney to cut 600 jobs in 2003 and to close factories in Ariège, spelling economic and social death for the Auzat and Tarascon region,
- E. whereas these restructurings also affect other industries – textiles and leather, chemicals, cars, banking, telecommunications, electronics and transport – and have an impact not only on employees but also on the economic and social cohesion of the whole of the area and the region,
- F. having regard to the mobilisation of the employees concerned, their trade unions, the public and their elected representatives in the affected regions,
- G. whereas many of these companies have benefited from State aid, tax incentives and Community funds in the name of safeguarding or developing jobs in particular regions or industries,
1. Offers its support to the workers taking action, with the support of the public and their elected representatives, against site closures and redundancies and in defence of jobs and the economy of their regions;

2. Takes the view that the extent of industrial restructuring in the EU is part of the global process of liberalising trade and deregulating the labour market in the framework of the WTO under pressure from the financial markets;
3. Considers it necessary to ensure that the EU maintains a strong, modern steel industry which is in a position to meet the needs of sustainable development and job creation;
4. Would like to see reinforced cooperation between steel manufacturing groups and steel users (the car industry, railways, the construction industry, etc.), to help develop skilled jobs;
5. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to adopt a more proactive strategy to deal with industrial restructurings and their social impact, with a view to forestalling their harmful impact on employment and working conditions, as well as on land use planning;
6. Deplores the fact that during the many recent restructurings of businesses, Community provisions on collective redundancies, transfers of undertakings and European Works Councils have not been adhered to; calls for thoroughgoing case-by-case investigations to be carried out and invites the Commission to take the necessary steps to enforce current legislation;
7. Calls on the Commission to learn lessons from the recent restructurings and to propose:
 - a reinforcement of Community rules on collective redundancies, restructurings and relocations,
 - a reinforcement of European Works Councils and their modes of cooperation, with a view to improving workers' right to information, to genuine consultation and to participation in decisions going as far as a right to deferment of redundancies,
 - an improvement in the directive on collective redundancies with the possibility of effective sanctions providing inter alia for decisions to close down enterprises to be reversed;
8. Takes the view that concentrative operations often anticipate restructurings; calls on the Commission to revise the procedures relating to concentrations which are based exclusively on the principle of free competition in order to take account of issues relating to employment and land use planning, and to make its agreement dependent upon a merger project that defends employment and respects the rights of employees; calls also for employees and their trade unions to have a statutory rights to access records and to be heard and for the Commission to be under a statutory obligation to reply to their opinions and proposals;
9. Calls on the Commission to carry out a comprehensive study of the current situation as regards concentrations and restructurings in the EU and their effects in terms of economic, social and land use planning aspects, and to report to it on the results of this study, so that as many lessons as possible for the future can be drawn from it;

10. Calls for the granting of national and Community aid to businesses to be subject to long-term undertakings on employment and local and regional development; calls for measures to be taken to provide trade unions and works councils with better information on aid received and to compel businesses to report back on the use made of the funds granted and to pay them back if the undertakings entered into are not fulfilled;
11. Instructs its Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy to draw up a report on the measures to be implemented in order to remedy the crisis in the steel sector and to ensure that a steel industry is maintained and developed in the EU;
12. Instructs its Committee on Employment and Social Affairs to draw up a new report on industrial restructurings with a view to helping strengthen employees' rights;
13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the candidate countries.