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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 Robert Goebbels, Stephen Hughes, Dagmar Roth-Behrendt and
Eryl Margaret McNally

on behalf of the PSE Group

on the outcome of the European Council (Brussels, 20-21 March 2003)

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European Parliament resolution on the outcome of the European Council (Brussels, 20-21 March 2003)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Brussels European Council conclusions of 20 and 21 March 2003,
 - having regard to the Lisbon European Council conclusions of 23 and 24 March 2000 and the Göteborg European Council conclusions of 15 and 16 June 2001,
 - having regard to the European Commission's communication of 14 January 2003 to the European Council of March 2003 on 'Choosing to grow – knowledge, innovation and jobs in a cohesive society' (COM(2003) 5),
 - having regard to its resolution of 13 February 2003 on the preparation of the 2003 Spring European Council (B5-0104),
- A. whereas the European Union is confronted with a worsening economic and social situation, and whereas the war in Iraq and economic uncertainties weigh heavily on the urgently needed economic recovery of Europe, and risky capital speculations, industrial closures and mass dismissals are becoming a daily occurrence,
- B. whereas it is of great importance for the new European Union Member States to be fully integrated in the modernisation of the European economic and social model with respect to the implementation of the objectives and mechanisms of the Lisbon strategy,
- C. whereas structural reforms have to result in more and better jobs, and whereas economic and social progress must be mutually supportive and achieved in close cooperation with the social partners,
- D. whereas all the political actors involved in the implementation of the Lisbon strategy are urged to achieve concrete and measurable results by ensuring there is real participation by the European and national parliaments, and by converting this into an agenda for European citizens and civil society,
1. Deeply regrets that, despite the efforts of the Greek Presidency, the European Council missed the opportunity to bridge the gap between strategic goals and concrete measures for more growth and employment by the adoption of concrete investment measures; stresses that, in view of the serious economic consequences of the war in Iraq, and in the interests of getting back onto its 3% growth path, Europe must introduce its own countercyclical recovery programme as a matter of urgency;
 2. Is of the opinion that, alongside a carefully planned assessment of the economic consequences of the war in Iraq, but in line with a more intelligent and flexible implementation of the stability goal, and with the involvement of private industry, the

creation of a significant number of Europe-wide and national public-private partnership investment projects (operating in such areas as education and training, life-long learning, research, environmentally friendly production, information and frontier technologies, telecommunications, energy and transportation networks) will be of great importance to the future of the European economy;

3. Welcomes the agreement on the energy tax directive, which will set a minimum excise duty level for oil products, gas, electricity and coal; is deeply concerned, however, that the European Council has had once again to postpone the final adoption of the tax package aimed at making concrete efforts to combat unfair tax competition and assisting with the completion of the internal market through a coordinated fiscal system; warns, however, against reducing benefits systems, as they remain a crucial part of the strategy to fight social exclusion;
4. Welcomes the application of the open method of coordination in support of research and innovation policy, but underlines again that the open method of coordination will be limited as regards its influence on action in pursuit of the 3% of GDP target for R&D if it is not accompanied by concrete investment projects and transparent monitoring of implementation; underlines again the need to train far more young scientists and engineers, including women, and to carry out benchmarking exercises within the open method of coordination to analyse effective measures which have been taken in Member States;
5. Welcomes the commitments on environmental liability, greenhouse gas emission reduction and intelligent energy; urges the Council again, however, to promote the removal of subsidies that have negative effects on the environment and to take steps to develop an ambitious EU plan for the development of clean technologies;
6. Regrets the absence of concrete progress in the field of environmental indicators for sound assessment of sustainable development, including the adoption of quantified sectoral environmental targets within the Cardiff process and the adoption of a mechanism to evaluate the implementation of the outcome of the Johannesburg Summit;
7. Is of the opinion that the current Employment Strategy, as recently reshaped, is an efficient instrument for fostering employment in the European Union; believes, furthermore, that the Employment Committee (EMCO), established in accordance with Article 130 of the Treaty, is best placed to assess employment issues, and that there was therefore no need to create a new Task Force on Employment; calls on the Council to limit the mandate of this task force and to report to the EP on its work;
8. Welcomes the substantial progress on the Temporary Workers Directive, but points out that the directive can provide for positive flexibility needs in the labour market only if a parallel high security is ensured for all workers concerned; calls on the Commission and Council, therefore, to take the utmost account of the amendments adopted by Parliament at first reading;
9. Regrets also, in the context of education policy, that the European Council failed to fill the gap between the implementation of the open method of coordination and agreeing to

concrete cofinanced projects aimed at investing in human capital and education; calls again for the European Structural Fund to be used more intensively, and with a direct focus on education and training;

10. Notes with some concern the new role of the Competitiveness Council and its more horizontal role of enhancing competitiveness and growth within the framework of the implementation of the Lisbon strategy; reiterates in this context that the cornerstone of the Lisbon strategy is a balanced policy mix of mutually supportive economic reform, full employment, social cohesion and sustainable development, and is therefore of the opinion that all the Council formations concerned should be equally involved under the coordinating role of the General Affairs Council;
11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and applicant countries, and the social partners.