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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to the European Council statement

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

by Francis Wurtz

on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

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

B5-0209/2003

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

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the outcome of the European Council,
 - having regard to the contributions made by the Commission and some Member States with a view to the Spring Summit, and particularly those concerning social and employment policy and the environment,
- A. whereas it is greatly concerned at the sharp rise in the restructuring, relocation and closure of companies, bringing with it economic redundancies, and at the economic slow-down in the EU,
- B. whereas EU citizens are demanding a new approach in the field of economic growth and development that is based on full employment, improved living and working conditions and high levels of training, education, environmental protection, public health and food safety, public services and social rights,
- C. whereas 2003 will be a crucial year for the enlargement of the European Union and that, as prepared for to date, that enlargement poses risks to economic and social cohesion,

Lisbon Strategy

1. Notes that the employment rate targets set at Lisbon have not been attained and regrets, in view of these circumstances, that the European Council has decided to consolidate and accelerate the Lisbon strategy, which centres primarily on the competitiveness of enterprises;
2. Regrets particularly that the European Council has essentially set store by broad economic policy guidelines, the strengthening of budgetary policies coordination and the internal market strategy, and has awarded minimal attention to social and social cohesion considerations;
3. Deplores the fact that the emphasis has once again been placed on structural reforms of the labour market based on the mobility of workers, flexibility and job insecurity in order to become 'more adaptable to economic conditions', and on the pursuit of liberalisation in many sectors, in a refusal to learn from the unfortunate experiments conducted in many countries;
4. Is of the opinion that the current Employment Strategy, as recently reshaped, with its balanced institutional approach which grants an important role of initiative to the Commission and guarantees EP involvement is an efficient instrument for fostering employment in the European Union; believes furthermore that the Employment

Committee established by virtue of Article 130 of the EC Treaty is best placed to assess employment issues, and that therefore there is no need to increase bureaucracy by creating a new Task Force on Employment in the Council: calls on the Council to limit the mandate of such a task force and to report to the EP on its work;

5. Regrets that social and employment policies are subject to strict observance of the stability pact; considers that genuine sustainable development has to be based on a more active employment policy via, *inter alia*, education and training, a more equitable distribution of wealth, continued high levels of social protection based on solidarity, and the reinjection of public funds;
6. Considers that the Stability Pact should be renegotiated and a line drawn under the obsession with cutting social spending by taking as criteria policies on employment and training, state social security and public investment, and by taking into account the budgetary problems experienced by some Member States, as well as economic uncertainties and political risks at world level;
7. Expresses concern at the desire to ‘undertake substantial tax-benefit reforms’, which could undermine social protection; calls for reforms to be implemented, in close cooperation with trade union organisations, to maintain a high level of social protection that is based on solidarity and is independent of commercial and financial interests;
8. Takes note that the Council has asked the Commission to submit any legislative initiatives to an in-depth impact assessment, but calls for this assessment not to be limited to consultation with companies and for it to also cover employment, quality of work and working conditions, the environment, regional planning and consultation of trade union organisation;
9. Regrets that the European Council did not decide to counter the great increase in the number of companies restructuring and relocating in the EU, which has a destructive effect on employment and regional planning; calls on the Commission to bring forward a proposal for reinforcing the rights and powers of employees and their trade unions, not least in the event of restructuring or merger;
10. Welcomes the commitment to ‘reduce gender specific differences’ on the labour market, but considers that the intention stated is not matched by the decisions taken; calls for equality for men and women to be incorporated into all Community policies and for new measures to be implemented with regard, in particular, to womens’ unemployment, job insecurity and the feminisation of poverty;
11. Takes note of what was said concerning services of general interest, but regrets that it is the Competitiveness Council which has been entrusted with taking decisions which have to obey competition rules; declares itself in favour of a framework directive on objectives and organisational arrangements for services of general interest and public services which should be exempt from competition rules and be based on the principles of continuity, solidarity, and equal access for and treatment of all users;
12. Expresses concern at the European Council’s stated desire to ‘foster entrepreneurship

through the education system'; insists that training and education systems should stay in the public sector and remain independent of economic forces;

13. Regrets that the European Council did not decide to relaunch the financing of large-scale Community projects in the fields of infrastructure, communications networks and new technologies, thereby contributing to an economic recovery;
14. Welcomes the European Council's call to strengthen the European research area and looks forward to the implementation of concrete measures that swiftly enable the target of 3% of GDP set for investment, and notably public sector investment, in research to be reached;
15. Takes note of the measures taken in respect of maritime safety as a result of the 'Prestige' disaster, not least the system of sanctions; calls for these measures to be supplemented with the immediate banning of flags of convenience;
16. Takes note of the implementation of the policies on the environment and sustainable development pursuant to the decision taken at Cardiff and Göteborg; would nevertheless like this process to be accelerated; calls in particular for the list of environmental indicators to be amplified and incorporated into the structural instruments;
17. Deplores the fact that the agreement on the taxation of savings was not finalised, but nevertheless considers that this agreement is still largely inadequate to combat tax dumping and outflows of capital; declares itself in favour of initiating a process for the taxation of short-term movements of capital (Tobin Tax);
18. Takes note of the Commission's intention to draw up, in time for the Spring 2004 European Council, a report on the use of structural indicators for assessing progress on the Lisbon strategy; asks to be consulted with regard to the definition of these indicators;

Miscellaneous issues

19. Takes note of the results of the referendum on the accession to the EU of Slovenia and Malta;
20. Expresses concern at the attention given to the letter from the United Kingdom concerning new approaches to international protection, which threatens to undermine the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees;
21. Condemns the wire-tapping of the communications of certain countries at the Council; calls for an investigation to be conducted to uncover and take action against the perpetrators and instigators of this unlawful eavesdropping;
22. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the candidate countries.