

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

1999



2004

Session document

11 December 2003

B5-0538/2003

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to the Commission statement

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

by Nicholas Clegg and Diana Wallis

on behalf of the ELDR Group

on the legislative and work programme of the Commission for 2004

European Parliament resolution on the presentation of the Commission's programme for 2004

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Annual Policy Strategy for 2004, adopted by the Commission in March 2003, which identifies the accession of ten Member States as the central priority for 2004, supported by two connected priorities, stability and sustainable growth,
 - having regard to the structured dialogue on these priorities and key initiatives with both the European Parliament and the Council,
 - having regard to the work programme submitted by the Commission for 2004,
 - having regard to the formal presentation of the Commission's legislative and work programme during the November 2003 session of the European Parliament,
 - having regard to Rule 37(2) of the Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the annual legislative programme is an invaluable tool for the functioning of the European institutions,
1. Stresses that the credibility of the Commission's right of initiative can only be safeguarded if the manner in which legislative and non-legislative proposals are presented guarantees the maximum degree of transparency and political accountability;
 2. Notes, therefore, the Commission's Legislative and Work Programme for 2003, which has for the second time been prepared following extensive preparatory dialogue with the European Parliament and the Council, marking a more integrated and coherent political planning process for the European Union;
 3. Notes the progress on the Commission's presentation of this document over the last few years, evolving as it has from a shopping list of legislative and non-legislative proposals to some strategic thinking, but considers that there is still room for improvement;
 4. Takes account of the accession of ten Member States as the central priority for 2004, supported by two connected priorities, stability and sustainable growth;
 5. Remains concerned, however, that these priorities are extremely general in nature and do not represent clearly defined political choices about the annual objectives of the Union;
 6. Urges the Commission to identify more sharply focused priorities in future in order to organise the legislative and non-legislative agenda in a more coherent manner;
 7. Is also concerned that the lengthy annexes to legislative and non-legislative proposals do not relate directly to the three priorities identified; stresses that the strategic purpose of the

annual programme can only be achieved if the Commission is more selective in its choice of priorities, so that a clearer choice of legislative and non-legislative proposals can be made;

8. Calls upon the Commission to respect the interinstitutional agreement signed in the summer of 2003 on better law-making, in which the Commission explicitly committed itself to explain fully the choice of legislative instrument for each proposal and the choice of legal base;
9. Regrets that there are only a few indications on legal bases in the annexes, and no reference whatsoever to the choice of legislative instrument;
10. Expresses its disappointment, therefore, that three months after signing the interinstitutional agreement on better law-making, the Commission has failed to honour this agreement, thus jeopardising any improvement in law-making;
11. Insists that greater detail and justification be provided for each new initiative, not least to facilitate input from national parliaments and European citizens;
12. Calls on the Commission to ensure, before submission of any new proposal, that such proposals comply with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, and to further seek to involve the national parliaments by informing them in good time about the annual programme in order to facilitate their planning for their legislative year;
13. Welcomes the move towards more rigorous impact assessment of legislative proposals; notes with concern, however, that the Commission is conducting impact assessments 'in house', when an independent view is required to guarantee the objectives of such assessments;
14. Calls on the Commission to use its right of initiative not only to propose new initiatives but also to revitalise the legislative proposals pending before the Council, and to keep Parliament informed of the reason for the impasse in each case;
15. Emphasises that the purpose of the annual programme is to generate agreement on the broad priorities set by the Commission, according to which the specific proposals are then made; refrains, therefore, from presenting additional lists of specific legislative and non-legislative proposals;

Regarding Eurostat

16. Welcomes the Commission's recognition of the gravity of the Eurostat affair and the Action Plan to address the weaknesses in the system; considers that most of the measures proposed, such as the strengthening of the communication flows between Commissioners and their departments, were already part of the 1999 reform process when this Commission took up office;
17. Underlines the importance of individual Commissioners' responsibility for the activities of their departments in the process of democratic accountability;

18. Notes the commitment to adopting a communication and specific measures for strengthening the independence and effectiveness of OLAF and its investigative capacity;
19. Reiterates the sole responsibility of OLAF for publishing and releasing information concerning its investigations, but considers nevertheless that the future framework should provide for OLAF to inform the president of the institution concerned on the opening of investigations into officials;
20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the present and future Member States.