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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to the Commission statement

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

by Charles Pasqua, Cristiana Muscardini and Gerard Collins

on behalf of the UEN Group

on the legislative and work programme of the Commission for 2004

European Parliament resolution on the legislative and work programme of the Commission for 2004

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the conclusions of the Lisbon and Stockholm European Councils,
 - having regard to the work programme of the European social partners for 2003-2005,
 - having regard to the Council Decision of 22 July 2003 on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States,
 - having regard to the growth initiative proposed and debated at the Brussels European Council,
 - having regard to Rule 37(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas 2004 will be considered a memorable year for the European Union, by reason of the simultaneous accession of ten countries embodying values and challenges which it will be for the entire Union to take on jointly,
- B. whereas the Commission will continue the negotiations with Bulgaria and Romania, assess Turkey's progress, and deliver an opinion on Croatia's application,
- C. whereas the Commission will further develop the cooperation agreements with Russia and will prepare cooperation agreements with the countries of the western Balkans,
- D. whereas the enlargement of the Union in 2004 has important implications for the future direction of the social policy agenda, for employment, sustainable growth and investment, demographic issues, competitiveness and combating poverty, and for the efforts to meet the Lisbon targets by 2010,
- E. whereas the Commission programme for 2004 confirms sustainable growth as one of the three main political priorities for 2004, and whereas sustainable growth is designed to promote and develop the European social model and social cohesion,
- F. whereas a degree of economic recovery is expected to commence in the second half of 2003 and to accelerate throughout 2004,
- G. whereas the simplification of procedures expected for projects using Community aid is important from the viewpoint of more rapid use of funds and greater transparency vis-à-vis the public, above all in the run-up to the great enlargement,

- H. having regard to the need to launch, as soon as possible, the great debate on the future of EU structural policy,

ENLARGEMENT AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

1. Promises vigilance to ensure that the Commission adapts its programmes to the new Member States and monitors their application of Community law;
2. Expects the Commission to pursue the negotiations with Bulgaria and Romania while remaining faithful to the Copenhagen criteria and to assess Turkey's progress on the basis of those same criteria;
3. Supports further development of the joint economic area, area of justice and security and research area with Russia, as well as the feasibility studies concerning Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia-Montenegro;

THE LISBON STRATEGY

4. Welcomes the inclusion of sustainable growth among the Commission's priorities for 2004, and believes that further efforts must be made to ensure the full realisation of the existing strategic objectives;
5. Believes it is essential to speed up progress towards the goals set at Lisbon in the context of the Union's strategy, with particular stress on examining the strategy and measures required for the stimulation of growth, competitiveness and employment, including investment in networks and know-how within a sustainable framework;
6. Is concerned, however, that the 2010 target date for meeting the Lisbon agenda may not be met, and calls on the Council and Commission to ensure that the spring Summit in 2004 provides a platform for renewing their commitment to achieving the goals set at Lisbon;
7. Expects the Spring Report to identify employment problems requiring urgent attention;
8. Welcomes the commitment to holding extended impact assessments of selected proposals in 2004, which will be the first year of the full implementation of this procedure, and calls on the Commission to systematically consult all interests in every Member State, including SMEs, and to use this procedure to assess the potential financial implications and the regulatory burden of its selected proposals;
9. Calls on the Commission to publish its decisions to open such procedures and to ensure that Parliament is regularly informed of such decisions;

SOCIAL POLICY

10. Points out that, in the Council's decision of 22 July 2003 on the employment guidelines, the need for an adequate labour supply and the promotion of active ageing

is emphasised, and believes that if this is to be achieved, an EU Seniors' Fund should be established to support enterprises hiring or retaining older employees, strengthening access to training and changing employer attitudes;

11. Calls on the Commission to put forward practical proposals to build on the momentum established by the European Year of People with Disabilities;
12. Urges the Commission to commemorate and celebrate the tenth anniversary of the International Day of the Family on 15 May 2004 in all the Member States of the enlarged Union;

STRUCTURAL FUNDS

13. Highlights the importance of the Structural Funds and the European Social Fund in tackling structural deficiencies in the enlarged Union, and urges the Commission, with regard to the next programming period post-2006, to ensure that peripheral regions receive equal treatment;

REGIONAL POLICY

14. Calls on the Commission to take suitable legislative measures with a view to simplifying the procedures for the use of Community funds, while ensuring a proper balance with the requisite monitoring procedures;
15. Calls on the Commission to submit, as soon as possible, a proposal on the Union's new structural policy from 2007 on, so as to enable the Council and Parliament to launch the debate with a view to concluding it well before the reference period, thus permitting the immediate use of new structural funds;

TRANSPORT POLICY

16. Welcomes the initiatives already taken by the Commission on transport safety; calls on the Commission, for 2004, to phase in measures related to users' needs while taking account of the risks existing in the current serious international situation;
17. Welcomes the Commission's initiatives for major trans-European projects in the energy, telecommunications and transport sectors, given their potential for stimulating real growth in Europe;
18. Is aware that these projects will require a considerable financial effort from the Member States, the private sector and the Community budget; calls on the Commission, accordingly, to consider this element in its new proposals, given its key importance for the success of the strategy for the major trans-European projects;

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

19. Recalls that water and energy are major issues and that unless the EU pursues active strategies both risk becoming significant factors of conflict or crisis in the world;
20. Calls on the Commission to continue with the Community's strategy on climate change;
21. Asks for consideration to be given to suitable means of financing for the Johannesburg Earth Summit objectives (water and energy);
22. Calls on the Commission, in the context of the Structural Funds, to give priority to programmes for the renewal of drinking water supply networks and the promotion of renewable energies;

ENERGY AND RESEARCH

23. Asks the Commission to submit proposals to the Member States for the highest level of integration of the energy markets of the new Member States into the EU energy and transport networks;
24. Supports the efforts to develop the European Research Area and to implement the action plan for increasing investment in R & D on the basis of the target of 3% of GDP while attracting suitable human resources into the research sector;
25. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the Governments of the Member States and of the accession countries.