

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

1999



2004

Session document

16 December 2003

B5-0583/2003

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to the Council and Commission statements

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

by Hans-Gert Poettering, Ilkka Suominen, Othmar Karas, Philippe Morillon,
Arie M. Oostlander and Hubert Pirker

on behalf of the PPE-DE Group

on the outcome of the European Council in Brussels, 12-13 December 2003

European Parliament resolution on the outcome of the European Council in Brussels, 12-13 December 2003

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels European Council of 12-13 December 2003 and to the Council and Commission statements on the outcome of this European Council meeting,
 - having regard to Rule 37(2) of the Rules of Procedure,
 - A. whereas in many parts the Presidency Conclusions mirror earlier Council Conclusions on which Parliament has already expressed its views during the debate on the preparation of this European Council meeting,
1. Recalls and refers back to its resolution adopted on 4 December 2003;

I. Economic growth

2. Welcomes the Council's endorsement of the European Action for Growth and considers this Action to be a useful complement to the Union's Lisbon agenda, which should continue to focus on the crucial chapter of structural reforms that are needed to restore European competitiveness, to generate growth and to create employment;
3. Notes that the requests by the European Parliament to act strictly within the framework provided by the Stability and Growth Pact and the Financial Perspectives has been taken into account, and acknowledges the prudent role recommended to the EIB;
4. Welcomes the emphasis put on the prominent role given to private resources to finance qualifying projects;
5. Advises evaluating the results of the European Action for Growth on an annual basis within the framework of the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines and invites the EIB to report on its preparatory work to the European Parliament as soon as possible;
6. Asks the European Parliament to be fully involved in the mid-term evaluation of the Action for Growth;
7. Recalls that the European Council in October 2003 committed the Council to report to the 2004 Spring European Council on coordination of the European Action for Growth with national initiatives;
8. Welcomes the European Council's twin emphasis on competitiveness and employment, and its decision to put improving Member States' performance in employment creation high on their next agenda, following publication of the Task Force report;

9. Regrets that the European Council did not take the opportunity to mention the Commission Communication on reviving the Doha Development Round negotiations and to voice support for the Commission's approach ahead of the WTO meeting on 15-16 December 2003;

II. Freedom, Security and justice

10. Welcomes the Commission's intention and the European Council's willingness to present the final evaluation of the implementation of the Tampere objectives, and recalls that following the Nice Treaty the next stage in the establishment of an area of freedom, security and justice provides for application of the codecision procedure to most of the measures relating to asylum and immigration; in consequence, calls urgently on the JHA Council to remove the political obstacles mentioned in the European Council conclusions;
11. Notes the willingness of the European Council to progress towards a joint approach to returns policy, but recalls that this must be indivisible from a reinforced dialogue with the third countries of origin and migratory transit, and calls on the Commission rapidly to conclude readmission agreements with those third countries;
12. Welcomes the willingness of the Council to ensure implementation of the measures provided for in the programme to counteract illegal immigration by sea, particularly in the light of the human tragedies that have occurred recently off Europe's Mediterranean shores, and asks to be involved on an equal footing with the Commission and Member States in implementing these measures;
13. Welcomes the willingness of the European Council to expedite the establishment of a European agency to manage operational cooperation at the common borders, and recalls that it is in favour of an operational Community structure which would precede the establishment of a European border guard corps, in order to increase cooperation on protecting external borders, particularly in anticipation of the 2004 enlargement; agrees with the measures aimed at easing control procedures at the border in so far as this does not lead to a lessening of security;
14. Calls for the development of a new Schengen Information System (SIS) and the implementation of rules on biometric data to take place in a transparent and democratic fashion, which involves consultation of the European Parliament and compliance with the rules on data protection;
15. Welcomes the willingness of the Council to strengthen the powers of Europol, and recalls that communitising it would be the best way to increase its efficiency;
16. Agrees with the importance given by the Council to the fight against drug trafficking, and reiterates that the measures envisaged should affect directly traffickers and criminals or terrorist organisations which finance their illegal activities with the proceeds from the illegal drug trade;
17. Is particularly concerned, like the European Council, at the growing number of acts of intolerance and xenophobia within the territory of the European Union, and supports the

establishment of an ongoing interdenominational dialogue as a way of combating this phenomenon;

18. Joins the Heads of State or Government in underlining its deep concern at the increase in instances of anti-Semitic intolerance, and strongly condemns all manifestations of anti-Semitism, including attacks on religious sites and individuals;
19. Supports the decision to build upon the existing European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia and to extend its mandate to make it a Human Rights Agency, and asks the Commission to check how the management structure might be adapted to the new tasks and what profile might be expected from the future management;

III. Enlargement

NEW MEMBER STATES

20. Joins the Council in welcoming the findings and recommendations of the Commission, contained in its Comprehensive Monitoring Reports, the Strategy Paper and the Regular Reports presented on 5 November 2003;
21. Underlines that the acceding countries must be fully prepared for membership from the date of accession and therefore insists that a number of serious gaps in the preparation for membership, especially those affecting the internal market and the delivery of EU funds to beneficiaries in the new Member States, must be filled in the run-up to accession;
22. Is confident that this can be achieved and that enlargement will take place on 1 May 2004 under good conditions;

BULGARIA AND ROMANIA

23. Welcomes the common objective to admit Bulgaria and Romania as full members in January 2007 and insists that the accession negotiations must progress to their overall conclusions on the basis of the existing principles set at the beginning of the negotiations, which are the same as those that applied to the ten acceding countries;
24. Underlines that meeting the target date for the conclusion of the negotiations will depend on the real progress made not only in the negotiations but also on the ground, on the basis of each country's own merits, which requires a considerable stepping-up of their efforts and preparations, especially in the administrative and judicial fields;

Cyprus

25. Shares the European Council's preference for a reunited Cyprus to join the Union on 1 May 2004;
26. With the European Council, urges all parties concerned, and in particular Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot leadership, strongly to support the UN Secretary General's efforts towards a settlement by 1 May 2004;

27. In this context, notes with interest the outcome of the Turkish Cypriot elections of 14 December;
28. Notes the European Council's statement that a settlement on the basis of the UNSC resolutions would greatly facilitate Turkey's membership aspirations;

Foreign Affairs

Turkey

29. Encourages Turkey to make further sustained efforts, in particular as regards strengthening the independence and functioning of the judiciary, the overall framework for the exercise of fundamental freedoms (association, expression and religion), the further alignment of civil-military relations with European practice, the situation in the south-east of the country and cultural rights;
30. Reaffirms its absolute rejection of terrorism and condemns all terrorists acts, including the attacks in Turkey; wishes to express its horror at these criminal acts and its solidarity with the Turkish authorities and people, and with the families of the victims; calls on the Council to consider the inclusion of militant Islamic Turkish groups, including IBDA-C, in the list of terrorist organisations drawn up by the EU;

Iraq

31. Greatly welcomes the arrest of the ex-dictator Saddam Hussein, and takes the view that his detention may constitute an important step along the path towards stability for the country; supports the EU's commitment to reconstruction and the decisive role to be played in this context by the UN, and takes the view that a rapid transfer of sovereignty to the Iraqi people as soon as circumstances permit can be regarded as the best signal that Iraq is moving towards normality and democracy and that it will be able to resume fully its place among the region's countries and in the international community;

MIDDLE EAST

32. Regrets that the conflict between Israel and Palestine has disturbed and made more difficult the Barcelona integration process and congratulates the continued efforts of the European Council, the Commission and the High Representative of the CFSP to promote peace in the region; welcomes the Geneva initiative, coming from within Israeli and Palestinian societies, with the aim of promoting a climate of confidence and lasting peace, confirming the desire to attain peaceful coexistence; considers that initiative as a valuable contribution by civil society to the Road Map, which remains the basis for an immediate restart of the peace process and has the approval of the entire International Community, supports all efforts towards a peaceful solution to the conflict, and will always strongly condemn terrorism and violence;

Euromed

33. Welcomes the willingness shown to give the Euro-Mediterranean partnership such

strategic importance, taking account above all of the new situation created after the establishment of an enlarged Union, in which our Mediterranean neighbours will be expected to play a decisive role as regards Europe's frontiers, and welcomes the results achieved at the Sixth Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Nice, as well as the sectoral Euro-Mediterranean conferences;

Western Balkans

34. Shares the statement by the European Council that the future of the Western Balkans lies within the EU, but stresses that the timetable for reaching that objective will be dependent on the progress made by each SEE country to comply with the Copenhagen criteria;
35. Expects the Commission's opinion on Croatia's application for EU Membership in spring 2004;
36. Attaches particular importance to further implementation of the Thessaloniki European Council decisions on the Western Balkans, including their participation in EU programmes and agencies;

Russia

37. Joins the Council in welcoming the close and effective working relationship established with Russia across a wide range of policy areas, reaffirms its determination to contribute to setting up a balanced and reciprocal strategic partnership with Russia, based on the values of the rule of law, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms;
38. Underlines, however, with reference to its double-track policy towards Russia, that the understanding and definition of these common values must be sharpened;

SECURITY STRATEGY

39. Welcomes the adoption of the European Security Strategy and its development on the basis of multilateralism and within the UN system, is convinced of the great contribution this Strategy, based on a global concept going beyond the strictly military dimension and ensuring the deployment of a whole package of political, economic, social and military measures, can make to preventing and resolving conflicts, and asks the incoming Presidency and the SG/HR, in coordination with the Commission, to present, as appropriate, concrete proposals for its implementation;

ESDP

40. Welcomes the defence agreement endorsed by the Council as a further step towards structuring the EU-NATO relationship and to setting up a comprehensive and credible European defence identity, including a military planning cell at the headquarters of the EU's Military Staff able to plan and run an operation independently of NATO, while not undermining the alliance or unnecessarily duplicating structures; insists that it be consulted in advance of decisions on ESDP operations and points out that only a well-informed Parliament is in a position to take the requisite personnel and budgetary decisions swiftly and efficiently;

Arab World

41. Welcomes the report on relations with the Arab world, which is highly relevant, given the current climate of international instability, and urges the need to deepen relations with the Arab countries with a view to creating an area of security, stability and prosperity with these countries;
42. Notes the Council's intention to develop an overall approach to the Arab world based on a report to be completed in March within the context of the Barcelona Process and New Neighbours Initiative, and requests that the Commission review its priorities forthwith by reinvigorating its democracy and human rights programmes in the countries concerned, including Iran and Libya, and making mainstream funding programmes more conditional on reform;

TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS

43. Shares fully the conviction expressed by the Council that the transatlantic partnership is irreplaceable and that the EU-NATO relationship is an important expression of this partnership; urges an effective reshaping of a genuine and well-balanced in-depth dialogue with the United States with a view to reinvigorating the transatlantic community of values and developing common actions based on respect for international law and the principles of the UN charter; underlines that Europe and its transatlantic partners stand united against the old as well as the new threats such as terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, failed States and organised crime and calls on both sides to work out joint strategies to combat them;
44. Welcomes in this context the Declaration adopted by the European Council, including the emphasis on all forms of dialogue between legislative bodies and civil societies on the two sides of the Atlantic;

Guantanamo

45. Continues to call for the Council Presidency to raise the issue of the rights of prisoners detained at Guantanamo Bay with the US authorities;
46. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European Council and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and accession countries.