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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 103(2) of the Rules of Procedure

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on behalf of the ALDE Group

on the Commission Legislative and Work Programme 2007

B6-0634/2006

European Parliament resolution on the Commission Legislative and Work Programme 2007

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission Legislative and Work Programme 2007 (COM(2006)629),
 - having regard to Rules 33 and 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the annual legislative and work programme is an important tool allowing the European Union to focus on achieving its key strategic objectives of fostering prosperity, solidarity and security within Europe and reinforcing its role on the international stage,
- B. considering the importance of 2007 for the European integration process: the European Union will welcome two new Member States, Romania and Bulgaria; Europe will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome; it will be a crucial year in the search for an institutional agreement and an extensive series of new financing programmes will start,

General remarks

1. Welcomes the European Parliament's contribution to the preparation of the Commission Work Programme and the Commission's efforts to continue improving the content of the annual programme; requests, nevertheless, that the Commission be more ambitious, coherent and precise in its strategy to tackle the European challenges; calls on the Commission, in particular, to better explain the distinction introduced this year between the 21 'strategic initiatives' and the 60 'priority initiatives';
2. Supports the crucial importance accorded in the 2007 annual programme to the implementation of the renewed Lisbon Strategy for sustainable growth and jobs and the emphasis on innovation, the internal market, health, migration, energy security, climate change and combating terrorism, but regrets the lack of ambition and initiatives to secure fundamental rights, freedom, justice and social inclusion, especially in view of the fact that 2007 will be the European Year of Equal Opportunities and that this year the Commission has so far failed to propose further legislation under Article 13 of the EC Treaty;

Reconnecting Europe with its citizens – Future of Europe

3. Welcomes the Commission's intention to connect Europe with citizens through an improved communication policy, Plan D as well as the reform of Regulation 1049/2001 on access to documents on the basis of a public consultation to be held at the end of 2006; stresses the need for close involvement of the European Parliament;

4. Proposes that Plan D and the Commission's communication policies be sharpened in order to contribute positively to changing public attitudes to the European Union, to combat distortions, and to help national governments and political parties to engage more effectively in public dialogue about the European dimension;
5. Notes the Commission's determination to be involved in the Berlin Declaration of the European Council; hopes that this Declaration will allow the European Council to confirm its commitment to the values and principles of European integration and, further, to shape some conclusions to the period of reflection in advance of the decisive European Council meeting in June 2007;
6. Calls on the Commission to play a more active role in finding a way out of the constitutional crisis; expects it to prepare itself vigorously for the new Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) that is to renegotiate the constitutional treaty;
7. Welcomes the commitment of the Commission to pursuing an activation of the bridging clauses (Article 42 TEU and 67(2) TEC), which are necessary steps that are compatible with the present and future constitutional situations;

Single market – Economic and financial affairs

8. Calls on the Commission to step up efforts to extend and deepen the internal market, in particular in the area of non-harmonised goods and public procurement; recalls that the internal market should deliver for the benefit of citizens;
9. Stresses the importance of improving the integration of the internal market in the field of financial services and insurances; welcomes the Commission's commitment to proposing the modernisation of the legislation on solvency, investment funds (UCITS) and the VAT treatment of financial services;
10. Calls on the Commission to give increased priority to strengthening transatlantic cooperation in the field of economic and financial affairs, which is needed for a proper functioning of the globalised markets, in fields such as stock exchanges, hedge fund activities, accounting standards, securities, banking, data protection, etc.;

Social policy

11. Notes that the Commission is undertaking a 'comprehensive stocktaking of European society', but suggests that Parliament be immediately consulted on any outcome, including legislative proposals that seek to provide solutions to problems identified within this report;
12. Takes note of the publication of a Green Paper on labour law as well as the Commission's intention to adopt a Communication on 'Pathways towards more flexicurity'; considers, however, that new legislation in the employment field at EU level may not be desirable if it does not take into account the different labour market traditions;

13. Welcomes the Commission's decision to launch a consultation process in order to define a 'European strategy in favour of social services of general interest'; calls on the Commission to propose a European legal framework that would provide legal certainty for social services of general interest, including in the area of health services;
14. Regrets that as we approach the European Year of Equal Opportunities the Commission has failed to bring forward any proposals under Article 13 of the EC Treaty, in particular specific directives on the rights of disabled people and older people;

Area of freedom, security and justice

15. Deeply regrets that the majority of measures already proposed are based on security, while only a few initiatives concern issues of freedom or easier access to justice for citizens on matters concerning their daily lives; calls on the Commission to take into account Parliament's opinions and proposals in this area and to be more active and committed in promoting the protection and exercise of fundamental rights, as undertaken by President Barroso when the Commission was approved and often reiterated by Commissioner Frattini;
16. Recalls that much remains to be done to secure fair and efficient access to justice for everyone; calls for more initiatives in the field of civil justice in order to deliver the balancing legal framework that would give security and access to justice;
17. Welcomes the proposed revision of the Council Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism, and stresses that increased security for citizens must never compromise the protection of their fundamental rights; reiterates that the fight against terrorism cannot be won by diluting the very principles that terrorism seeks to destroy;
18. Requests that the Commission complete the anti-discrimination package under Article 13 of the EC Treaty and reiterates its request for a horizontal directive against discrimination based on sexual orientation, age and disability and for measures to ensure the mutual recognition of marriage or registered partnership of same-sex couples;
19. Regrets that the Commission has so far failed to properly involve Parliament in the negotiations with the US that led to the conclusion of an interim PNR agreement, and insists that the long-term agreement be negotiated with the full involvement of Parliament so as to ensure transparency and democratic scrutiny;
20. Welcomes the Community's accession to the Hague Conference, but calls on the Commission to involve Parliament in its work;

Asylum, immigration and visa policy

21. Believes in the need for an EU common immigration policy and welcomes therefore the migration initiatives proposed, whose longer-term objective should be the establishment of legal channels for immigration; strongly supports the proposal for a 'green card' system and stresses that this should not only encompass high-skilled migrants but also envisage a possibility for issuing short-term 'green cards' for manual labour migrants;

22. Stresses the need for a common EU visa policy, with the conclusion of the VIS (Visa Information System) being a key element of this objective; stresses, however, that it has a number of concerns regarding data protection, access to the data and interoperability of databases and regrets that the Framework Decision on Data Protection in the third pillar remains blocked in the Council;
23. Believes that the future return directive is necessary for the functioning of an EU asylum system, but stresses that it should be based on the promotion of voluntary return, including possible supportive measures in the country of origin;

Energy policy

24. Welcomes the Commission's proposal to consider a 'European energy policy' as a strategic objective for 2007;
25. Stresses that an essential element of a common energy policy should be enhanced solidarity between Member States in order to deal with difficulties related to the physical security of infrastructures and security of supply; considers, furthermore, that such enhanced solidarity would considerably strengthen the capacity of the EU to defend its common interest on energy issues at international level;
26. Strongly holds the view that an essential part of maintaining security of supply is the rapid transposition of current EU provisions by all Member States to achieve a fully functioning internal market in electricity and gas to enhance competitiveness, transparency and energy efficiency;
27. Urges Member States to create an EU internal energy market by setting a balance between internal and external sources of supply and ensuring interoperability of national energy grids;
28. Calls on the Commission to pursue enforcement action including fines against companies which breach competition rules; encourages the Commission to pursue Member States which unduly protect national energy champions;

Health and environmental protection

29. Urges the Commission to increase its commitment to developing a coherent policy on health emergencies, disability, chronic illness, patient mobility and patient information;
30. Calls on the Commission, in line with Parliament's own-initiative report of 6 July 2006, to bring forward an amendment to the Biological Agents Directive 2000 to ensure better protection for healthcare workers against the risks of needlestick injuries;
31. Calls on the Commission to demonstrate a high level of ambition and reaffirm the EU leadership when preparing the Green Paper on Post-2012 Climate Change;

32. Strongly urges the Commission, in accordance with the EP resolution, to propose a separate emissions trading scheme for aviation emissions;
33. Calls for mandatory targets for the reduction of CO2 emissions from vehicles;
34. Calls for ambitious and legally binding targets for the Commission's Euro VI proposal;
35. Welcomes the legislative proposal for regulating Carbon Capture and Geological Storage (CCS);
36. Notes with satisfaction the revision of Regulation (EC) No 1980/2000 on the eco-label award scheme and Regulation (EC) 761/2001 allowing voluntary participation by organisations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS);
37. Calls on the Commission to acknowledge the importance of national courts in the implementation of EC environmental law;

Education and culture

38. Welcomes the Commission proposal for the Erasmus Mundus II programme but expresses its regret again at the lack of more ambitious proposals; reiterates the call from both Parliament and the Council to promote excellence in European universities, higher education, life-long learning and better knowledge of languages;
39. Stresses the importance of ratification by the EU and its Member States of the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity and its follow-up, and asks to be closely associated with the preparatory action for the 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue;
40. Urges the Commission to present a White paper outlining a global approach on sport;
41. Urges the Commission to present a communication and a working document on media pluralism, as requested on several occasions by Parliament;

Agriculture and Fisheries

42. Stresses the importance of continuing the reform of the Common Agriculture and Fisheries Policy and the full implementation of the reforms already agreed, as well as investing more in research and technology in these sectors;
43. Urges the Commission to take due account of the increasing opportunities arising from the steady growth of demand in the milk and dairy sector on the world market and calls on the Commission, therefore, to continue the dialogue with milk producers and urge them to conduct the necessary structural changes in order to make them 'fit for the global market';
44. Underlines the need for a Common Agriculture Policy 'health check' in 2008/2009; stresses, however, the importance of compulsory co-funding;

45. Stresses the importance of developing the European maritime policy and asks the Commission to consider, in the context of legislative proposals which will follow the Green Paper, a European Coast Guard;
46. Calls on the Commission to present as quickly as possible a legislative proposal to improve EU actions in the fight against Illegal Unreported and Unregulated fishing (IUU);

Transport policy

47. Welcomes the proposal for a Green Paper confirming the strategic initiative on urban transport; encourages the reflection on urban transport as a key for the mobility of the citizens, and as a response to certain environmental concerns, while respecting the subsidiarity principle;
48. Urges the Commission to present a legislative proposal on the recycling of end-of-life vessels; recalls that such a proposal would be appropriate in the set of measures which will follow the debate on the Green Paper on European Union maritime policy;
49. Supports the Commission in its will to revive a European policy for ports; recalls that the Community ports play a crucial part in the establishment of an integrated and effective European transport network; also emphasises that the question of financing Community ports and the competition between them will need to be duly taken into account in the Communication's communication;

Regional policy

50. Calls on the Commission, in view of the important role that regions and cities play in contributing to the Lisbon agenda and reinforcing the potential of growth and job creation, to facilitate and accelerate the implementation of the Structural Funds in the Member States in 2007-2013;
51. Calls on the Commission to disseminate best practice on the use of the Structural Funds (in particular public-private partnership) in all official EU languages, from which Member States as well as local and regional authorities would be able to benefit;
52. Calls on the Commission to take into account the situation as regards the accessibility of the built environment in the European Union, and welcomes the Commission-funded 'build for all' project which provides a toolkit for accessibility to the built environment for any building funded through Structural Funds;
53. Calls on the Commission to undertake communication campaigns in cooperation with regions and cities, in order to raise awareness among those involved, such as citizens, NGOs and responsible political and economic bodies, of the concrete benefits and results of the Structural Fund programmes in their regions and cities;

Budgetary accountability and administrative reform

54. Emphasises that the Commission should urge Members States to issue national declarations as suggested in the Parliament's 2003 and 2004 discharge resolutions and as was incorporated in the Interinstitutional Agreement for 2007-2013; welcomes in this light the initiatives taken by the Netherlands and the United Kingdom;
55. Welcomes the recent initiatives of the Commission aimed at a possible reduction in administrative costs imposed on private and public actors; urges the Commission to present its action plan containing clear targets, indicators and concrete proposals for areas most suitable for rapid, sustainable and tangible reduction of administrative costs;

Development policy

56. Regrets the poor quality of proposals put forward by the Commission in the field of development and cooperation; calls, in particular, for greater European involvement in malaria eradication programmes and specific action to be taken in the field of counterfeit medicines, as expressly requested by Parliament;
57. Calls on the Commission to respect its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals and to come forward with concrete proposals for alternative financing of development programmes;
58. Calls on the European Union to continue being one of the main international donors in humanitarian action and to be active in taking forward the reform process of the global humanitarian system, in accordance with the principles of the 'Good Humanitarian Donorship' initiative, with the active involvement of the Commission;
59. Calls on the EU to improve policy coherence and coordination between different instruments of EU humanitarian aid through appropriate measures and asks the Commission to react and follow the matter up;

Trade policy and negotiations in the WTO

60. At multilateral level, calls for a successful and ambitious outcome to the Doha Round; regrets the decision to suspend the negotiations on the Doha Development Agenda sine die and points out that the failure of multilateral negotiations and a shift to bilateral/regional agreements could lead to an unequal process of liberalisation and uneven development and would thus adversely affect the least developed countries in particular;
61. At bilateral/regional level, supports the negotiations on the Economic Partnership Agreements between the European Union and the African, Pacific and Caribbean countries as long as they bring our trade relations in conformity with World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules and they contribute to better and more efficient North/South and South/South trade exchanges;
62. Insists that, in the implementation of the second cycle of the Community's Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) scheme, the Commission should, in cooperation with

beneficiary countries, strengthen its commitment to promoting and ensuring effective implementation of the core human and labour rights enshrined in UN/ILO Conventions in GSP+ beneficiary countries, as well as the Conventions related to environment and governance principles; believes that, as a general rule, granting preferential access to countries which do not respect human rights, international labour conventions and environmental agreements tends to weaken the incentive for countries to respect ILO and UN rules;

Foreign affairs: enlargement, security and defence

63. Expects the Commission to insist on visa facilitation for the countries of the Western Balkans, as a concrete signal that their European aspirations are being taken seriously;
64. Looks forward to the further development and strengthening of the European Neighbourhood Policy;
65. Stresses the need to strengthen the mechanisms of parliamentary oversight of European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) development in general and ESDP missions in particular, and highlights the need to provide proactive information and conduct debates before joint actions in the field of the ESDP are decided so that parliaments can voice their opinion and concerns;

Better lawmaking and implementation

66. Commends the Commission for its proposals on codification and simplification of legislation, and for its continuing efforts to improve the quality of EU regulation, including the establishment of an assessment board;
67. Underlines the need to accelerate the simplification and consolidation of EU legislation and to put more effort into better regulation, prompt transposition and correct implementation of EU legislation; calls for a stronger monitoring and enforcement mechanism in respect of the implementation of European legislation in the Member States;
68. Calls on the Commission to make the whole process of transposition and implementation more transparent and to persuade Member States to produce the so called 'correlation tables' that show exactly which part of the law is from the European Union and which part is added by them;
69. Urges the Commission to pay particular attention to the quality of its justifications of proposals that are now to be sent directly to Member State parliaments;
70. Calls on the Commission to always attach citizens' summaries, in a format that may be accessed by disabled people, to its future legislative proposals;

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71. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.