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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 UEN Group

on the Legislative and Work Programme of the Commission for 2007

B6-0635/2006

European Parliament resolution on the Legislative and Work Programme of the Commission for 2007

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 16 December 2004 on the strategic political orientations of the Barroso Commission,
 - having regard to the Commission communication on the Annual Policy Strategy for 2007 'Boosting Trust through Action' (COM(2006) 122),
 - having regard to its resolution of 18 May 2006 on the Commission's Annual Policy Strategy for 2007,
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 24 October 2006 on its legislative and work programme for 2007 (COM(2006) 629),
 - having regard to the Framework Agreement of 26 May 2005 on relations between the European Parliament and the Commission and to the 'structured dialogue' established in that framework,
 - having regard to Rules 33 and 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas 2007 will be the year in which the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome is celebrated and whereas therefore the scheduled Berlin Declaration, marking this date, will allow Europe's leaders and the European Institutions to renew their commitment to an enlarged global and competitive Europe, where solidarity is a central principle,
- B. whereas the Legislative and Work Programme (LWP) of the Commission for 2007 should reflect the capacity of the enlarged European Union to find shared solutions which could tackle internal and worldwide shared challenges,
- C. whereas European public policy can and must have a real influence in helping citizens anticipate and react to a rapidly changing society,
- D. whereas the Commission has strongly emphasised improving the quality of life of European citizens and promoting a cleaner environment and the development of research and innovation,
- E. whereas the implementation and completion of a modern single market, with the elimination of the still existing barriers to the free movement of people, services and workers, constitutes a vitally important tool for promotion of the global competitiveness of Europe,
- F. whereas security, justice, safety and protection of citizens in Europe is a goal set by the European Union and supported by the Commission in its Work Programme 2007,

- G. whereas growth and jobs, and the opportunities they create, must be at the heart of the Commission's agenda for Europe because they are an essential condition for economic prosperity, social justice and sustainable development and they are a core criterion by which citizens will judge whether Europe is delivering results in their daily lives,
 - H. whereas one of the major challenges of the Commission is equipping Europe to manage globalisation and compete in a worldwide economy which has radically changed over the past years with new and significant actors,
 - I. whereas the European Union should use the available financial resources to match political priorities by ensuring the quality and cost-effectiveness of European legislation,
 - J. whereas multilingualism and therefore the promotion of cultural diversity should be one of the cornerstones of the cultural policy of the enlarged European Union,
 - K. having regard to the utmost importance of carrying out comprehensive and independent impact assessments on proposed EU legislation,
 - L. whereas nothing undermines support for the European Union more than cases of mismanagement, incompetence or fraud,
1. Welcomes the general approach of the Commission's Legislative and Work Programme for 2007, which has endorsed a wide range of contributions made by the committees of the European Parliament within the framework of the new structured dialogue, and underlines its political focus and the relevance of its political priorities;
 2. Notes with satisfaction the Commission's decision in principle to draw a distinction between a manageable number (21) of 'strategic initiatives' - which the Commission commits to deliver in 2007 - and a longer list of (60) 'priority initiatives', which will be delivered if possible in this timescale; believes that such a distinction increases the clarity and credibility of the Legislative and Work Programme as an instrument for proposing and adopting a coherent legislative agenda for the coming year;

Priorities for 2007

Modernising the European economy

Research and development

3. Believes that the establishment of the proposed European Institute of Technology (EIT), if it is based on the right principles, will contribute to the competitiveness of the European economy, by helping to reverse the fragmentation of research, education and innovation efforts, which has stunted progress so far;
4. Reiterates that if Europe is to thrive among the knowledge economies of tomorrow, innovation must be more and more a central part of our economic and social strategies to render the European economy more dynamic and competitive, while cooperative research must be fostered, in particular in the field of advanced technologies;

Space policy

5. Supports the strategic objective of devising a coherent and comprehensive European Space Policy, in conjunction with the policies and activities of the Member States and the European Space Agency, directed to the exploitation of space technologies and systems in support of the Union's policy and objectives;

Telecommunications and information technologies

6. Urges that enhanced coordinated efforts be undertaken to promote the telecoms and information society technology sectors, and that these should be put high on the policy agenda, if the European Union is to play a major role in this highly competitive area;

Internal market

7. Strongly underlines the importance of unleashing the full potential of the Single Market through the finalisation of the Single Market Strategy for 2007-2014; suggests complementing this by developing an implementation plan for the Services Directive;
8. Stresses that a key priority for 2007 in the field of financial services legislation should be the proper implementation and timely application of legislation already adopted in recent years;
9. Supports the two priorities indicated by the Commission in this field - a modern, light-touch set of company law rules that cuts red tape while ensuring sound corporate governance and a reform of Europe's intellectual property rules that promotes innovation and rewards those who innovate;
10. Considers that competitive tax systems can coexist inside the single market and that they are a valid tool to promote beneficial effects for consumers and companies;

Agriculture

11. Takes note of the initiative of the Commission on the reform of the wine sector, a key element in the European multifunctional agricultural model, and considers wine-growing essential to promote such a reform based on the maintenance of the CMO and of the relevant Community budget under the first CAP pillar; considers that the Commission should also initiate a reform of the CMO in the field of fruit and vegetables;
12. Calls for the reform to be accompanied by improvements in the competitiveness of the European wine sector within an increasingly competitive international context, including through specific promotion campaigns to regain market share and open up new markets within and outside the EU;
13. Calls on the Commission, in 2007, to launch a debate on the future of milk quotas in view of the scheduled undertaking to perform a 'health check' on the CAP in 2008;
14. Calls on the Commission to complete the EU Biomass and Biofuels Strategy to facilitate the use of renewable energy in order to help reduce energy dependency;

15. Stresses that rural development policies must be the key to improving the competitiveness and environmental sustainability of agriculture and boosting jobs and growth in related areas of the economy;

Addressing the challenges of European society

16. Recognises the difficulties that young people may face in relation to economic and social integration when leaving education and entering the labour market, and considers that specific measures are necessary to address disabled people's needs and youth unemployment through training and the development of entrepreneurial spirit;
17. Encourages the Commission to carry out appropriate studies and to propose to Member States some guiding principles in relation to the 'flexicurity' approach, which could help to promote work-life balance and reconcile work with life cycles, while protecting workers' capacity to enter and stay in the labour market through mobility or improvement of skills thanks to training and lifelong learning;
18. Reiterates, in view of the challenges resulting from demographic change, its call for policies to reconcile the demands of working life and family life to create a flexible economy and improve the quality of life of workers;

Better management of migration flows

19. Supports the initiatives of the Commission in the field of management of migration flows at European level in order to establish a clear and safe framework for economic immigrants, notably highly skilled workers, which clarifies their obligations and rights;

Secure, competitive and sustainable energy

20. Reiterates the strategic significance of energy for the EU's future;
21. Calls on the Member States to implement the Action Plan adopted by the Commission to improve the energy market, accelerate the use of new technologies, diversify and secure supplies, control demand and promote energy efficiency, notably through better coordination of national energy policies;
22. Considers it desirable that the European Union should speak and negotiate with a single voice in dealing with its energy suppliers - notably Russia - in order to reinforce its negotiating capacities and guarantee the interests of all its Member States;

Making Europe a better place to live

Environment, transport and sustainable development

23. Underlines the leading role of the European Union at international level in promoting environmental issues, and agrees that for the following year efforts should be directed towards the protection of biodiversity and tackling climate change, including by means of a dedicated energy policy focused on increasing the share of renewable energy, energy saving and efficiency in Europe; welcomes in this respect the Green Paper on Post-2012 Climate Change, which will help identify areas in which action is needed;

24. Urges the Commission to accelerate the initiatives taken after the Environment Council of 9 March 2006 in order to address the problem of water scarcity and drought;
25. Welcomes the Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP), which will promote the sustainable use of natural resources;
26. Calls on the Commission to seriously explore how the EU can make a contribution to better urban transport, used by millions of Europeans each day; welcomes in this context the Green Paper on transport in urban and metropolitan areas, which should identify the challenges and possible new actions, including early actions, and responsibilities;

Health

27. Welcomes the Commission's contribution to shaping health policy in Europe, with the aim of establishing a Community framework for safe, high-quality and efficient health services throughout the EU;
28. Underlines the fact that an effective European health strategy calls for improved collaboration between health services, in order to ensure patient safety wherever healthcare is provided and address uncertainties over the application of Community law to health services, to provide information on the consequences of lifestyle changes and to address the challenges of a healthy ageing population;

Education

29. Welcomes the Commission's decision to create a special portfolio for multilingualism, which should focus the attention of citizens on the importance of cultural diversity and therefore dialogue between cultures in an enlarged Union; stresses that further initiatives will need to be undertaken by the Commission to promote excellence in European universities;

Security of citizens

30. Supports the view that the EU must fight crime and violence in order to protect citizens and that to this end law enforcement and criminal investigations across the EU should be pursued; in this respect, since security is central to Europeans' wellbeing, also supports the measures that the Commission proposes to implement in order to combat terrorism, terrorist propaganda and the transmission of expertise - for example concerning explosives - for terrorist purposes, including by fighting cyber crime in all its forms;
31. Supports the implementation of the External Borders Fund in 2007 and agrees with the view that border control will be a key area for action in 2007, together with the extension of the Schengen area;
32. Welcomes the intention of completing the Common European Asylum Policy by 2010 and considers that it is necessary to complement it with the EC Directive on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally resident third-country nationals, in order to ensure better management of migration flows;

Europe as a world partner

Enlargement

33. Supports the Commission's opinion that consolidation, conditionality and communication are the main guiding principles for the EU enlargement strategy; underlines the need for an in-depth and broad analysis of all aspects and implications of the further enlargements of the EU, including the lessons to be drawn from the previous enlargement and recommendations for further actions to support countries on their way to membership, foster public support for further enlargement, address enlargement challenges and ensure the EU's integration capacity;

Bilateral relations

34. Considers the EU Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) to be a key strategy for relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours by means of which a common area of peace, stability, security, respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law and prosperity can be created and extended;
35. Stresses, therefore, the importance of strengthening the ENP; urges the Commission to pay the utmost attention to democratic values when reviewing the progress of the implementation of the existing ENP Action Plans, when renewing Action Plans and Agreements about to expire, and in EU relations and dialogues with its major strategic partners;
36. Notes that the current EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) expires in 2007 and again urges the Commission to lay down, further to the human rights clause, additional conditions as well as a clear mechanism to monitor the implementation of all the commitments in the Agreement;
37. Notes that the EU is preparing the negotiations for a comprehensive new Enhanced Agreement with Ukraine in 2007, as a successor to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement; stresses that the new agreement should include provisions on common values and on enhanced cooperation in the fields of justice, freedom and security, extensive provisions concerning energy and arrangements for cooperation on a broad range of areas such as transport and the environment; therefore calls on the Commission to strengthen mutual relations on the basis of gradual economic integration and a deepening of political cooperation;
38. Emphasises the importance of implementing the five-year work programme agreed last year in Barcelona on the future of the European Union's Mediterranean Policy, in fields such as political and security dialogue, a code of conduct to counter terrorism, free trade, energy, transport, the environment, education, women's rights, cultural dialogue and migration;

Other relations

39. Underlines that the transatlantic relationship must have a priority status which should be strengthened by a strong framework agreement, and reiterates that the EU and the USA, as

powers of global significance, have a responsibility to cooperate to provide leadership in the world by promoting peace and stability, responding to global challenges, contributing to the expansion of world trade and building democracy and development around the world;

40. Reiterates the importance of the EU agreements with major partner countries, such as India, China and the Euromed countries, as well as the ASEAN countries or Latin America, but insists with regard to trade aspects on the importance of open markets and respect for intellectual property rights;

Regional issues

41. Notes that the countries of South-East Europe are making significant progress within the Stabilisation and Security Framework, with a view to future accession to the European Union as referred to in the 'Thessaloniki Declaration', and expects the Union to take a leading role in consolidating stability and increasing prosperity in the Western Balkans as well as in helping the countries of this area to reinforce their economic and political links;

Defence market

42. Welcomes the Commission's plans regarding the defence initiatives and defence equipment procurement in order to make less extensive use of the defence-related exemption provided for by Article 296 of the EC Treaty, thus reducing fragmentation of the defence equipment market and related industries and promoting the competitiveness of the European defence sector;

Development policy

43. Believes that, in order to enable the ACP countries to attain development goals, the regional development aspect should prevail in the framework of the negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreements;

Trade policy and WTO negotiations

44. Is deeply concerned about the suspension of the WTO Doha Round and urges a strong commitment by the Commission, in concert with the other major players in the Round, to come to a balanced agreement on each of the main negotiation topics under discussion, putting the development of the developing countries and in particular of the least developed countries at the core of the conclusions;
45. Takes note of the competitiveness agenda of the Commission for the future of EU trade policy, together with the associated initiatives; considers that a comprehensive new strategy on China, a global strategy for protecting intellectual property rights, the renewal of the EU's market access strategy, more vigorous measures against piracy, and a new programme of bilateral free trade agreements, seen as a complementary strategic tool of the multilateral approach, will represent very serious challenges in trade policy in the coming months;
46. Considers that any reform of the trade defence instruments, which should take account of

the new world realities, should be negotiated at WTO level and accepted and implemented by all major WTO players; calls for the EP to be involved in the process;

Horizontal issues

47. Calls on the Commission to make continuous efforts to improve the quality of the new programmes and projects which are financed by the EU in the context of the new Financial Perspectives and to work to promote their reliable financial management and the best value for money;

Better law-making/making policy work

48. Welcomes the Commission's initiatives to simplify and modernise the European regulatory framework, as well as to withdraw pending legislation, after an appropriate screening exercise; in this respect applauds the Better Regulation Strategic Review, with its new actions on impact assessment, simplification and administrative burdens; on this latter point, expects the Action Plan defining priority actions to cut such burdens at EU and Member State levels by 25% by 2012;

49. Is aware that the development and implementation of EU policy call for partnership and commitments by the Member States to their reform programmes; considers, however, that the Commission has a central task in helping Member States to actively promote and develop major EU policies and that the renewed Lisbon Strategy is an example of the role the Commission can play;

Impact assessments

50. Welcomes the assurance given by the Commission that it will conduct comprehensive impact assessments on all legislative measures, including the comitology process, proposed as either strategic or priority initiatives in 2007;

51. Believes that successfully applying the impact assessment process is critical to ensuring the Better Law-Making culture in the European Union to which all its institutions aspire; reiterates that the continued development of a common methodology between the institutions in applying impact assessments is an important objective for the coming years;

EU agencies

52. Requests the Commission to proceed with an overall evaluation of the role, functioning and effective output of both regulatory and executive agencies, and also to assess whether a revision of the provisions relating to executive agencies might be appropriate;

Link between political priorities and budgetary means

53. Insists on the fact that, in view of the limited budgetary resources of the European Union, compared to its needs, the Commission should take particular care over the use of financial resources by better focusing budgetary and human resources, as recalled by its Resolution on the Commission's Annual Policy Strategy;

Bringing Europe closer to its citizens

54. Calls on the Commission to review its communication strategy and step up its efforts to communicate with European citizens and to explain the European project, in order to increase the visibility of the EU, including the European Parliament, in this process; furthermore, urges the Commission to cooperate closely with Parliament on the operational proposals resulting from the White Paper on Communication;
55. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the Parliaments of the Member States.