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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 Commission's Annual Policy Strategy for 2009

European Parliament resolution on the Commission's Annual Policy Strategy for 2009

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 16 December 2004 on the strategic political orientations of the Barroso Commission¹,
 - having regard to the Communication of 13 February 2008 from the Commission on its Annual Policy Strategy for 2009 (COM(2008) 72 final),
 - having regard to the Framework Agreement² 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 the European Union should be, first of all, a Community of shared values and should therefore update, revitalise and modernise such inherent values,
- B. whereas the Commission Policy Strategy for 2009 should reflect the capacity of the enlarged European Union to propose and 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 placed strong emphasis on making the role of the citizen central to the European project, inter alia by improving the quality of life in Europe, making it easier to find jobs and promoting better health conditions in our countries,
- E. whereas the implementation and completion of a modern single market, with the elimination of the persisting barriers to the free circulation of people, services and workers, constitutes a vitally important tool for the global competitiveness of Europe,
- F. whereas security, justice, safety and protection of citizens in Europe are goals adopted by the European Union and supported by the Commission in its past Work Programmes,
- 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 energy, and in particular renewable energies, must be considered a strategic area

¹ P6_TA(2004)0109.

² P6_TA(2005)0194.

for the future of the European Union in order to manage climate change and guarantee security of supply of raw materials,

- I. whereas the European Union must assume a major role in world affairs, especially in key areas such as the Middle East and Balkans,
- J. whereas one of the major challenges for the Commission is equipping Europe to manage globalisation and compete in a worldwide economy which has radically changed over the past years, with the appearance of new significant players,
- K. whereas the European Union should use the available financial resources to match political priorities by ensuring quality and cost-effectiveness of European legislation,
- L. whereas multilingualism, and therefore the promotion of cultural diversity, should be one of the cornerstones of the cultural policy of the enlarged European Union,
- M. whereas nothing undermines support for the European Union more than cases of mismanagement, incompetence or fraud,
 - 1. Welcomes the general approach proposed by the Commission in its Communication, which follows the previous orientations and takes into account the ongoing concerns and aspirations of the European Parliament as well as the outcome of a range of debates held by Parliament's committees within the framework of the new structured dialogue, and underlines its political focus and the relevance of its political priorities;

Priorities for 2009

Creating a Europe of values

- 2. Considers that many values – such as inter alia freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights – are common to the Member States in a Union in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between men and women prevail;
- 3. Calls on the Commission to constantly reaffirm and promote these values and convictions in its policy strategy and thus reinforce the European Union's position in its dialogue with other cultures and more generally in its role in the world;

Growth and jobs

Research and development

- 4. Welcomes the Commission's statement that 'the knowledge society is a cornerstone of the growth and jobs strategy'; considers that in order to achieve the ambitious aims of the Lisbon Strategy a new approach must be adopted to developing and promoting research, in particular in high-technology areas, education, training, innovation and life-long learning; believes that proper investment in knowledge can create a more prosperous economy which could fight such problems as poverty, social exclusion and unemployment and which could ensure better protection of workers;

5. Underlines 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 in this field, in particular taking into account the needs of some sections of the population who are still disadvantaged, such as disabled people and women;
6. Notes the Commission's efforts to attain aims for the employment rate established in the Lisbon Strategy; encourages the Commission to continue developing a common approach to flexicurity paths, which should promote, on the one hand, greater flexibility on the labour market and, on the other, security for workers, which can be necessary in order to achieve better economic results;
7. Urges the Commission to develop a common approach to challenges arising from demographic change; believes that the best way to meet these challenges is to introduce proper policies which support families as well as measures to reconcile the needs of working life and family life; calls, therefore, on the Commission to create a framework for exchanges of best practices in this area;

Internal market

8. Strongly underlines the importance of unleashing the full potential of the single market through the finalisation of the Single Market Strategy for 2007-2014; considers that tax-competitive systems can coexist inside the single market and that they are a valid tool to promote beneficial effects for consumers and companies;
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;

Agriculture

10. Calls on the Commission to finalise the EU Strategy for Biomass and Biofuels to facilitate the use of renewable energy in order to contribute to the reduction of energy dependency;
11. Stresses that rural development policies should be the key to improving the competitiveness and environmental sustainability of the agricultural sector and boosting jobs and growth in related areas of the economy;

Sustainable Europe

12. Welcomes the Commission's initiative to make European transport sustainable in energy and environmental terms by encouraging the greening of the transport sector; stresses that it is necessary to combine a range of mutually supportive and corrective policies in order to strike the right balance between sustainable mobility, the importance of the transport sector in economic terms and environmental aspects;
13. Underlines that the role of maritime transport in the European economic system as a whole should be further strengthened and therefore welcomes the development of the new

EU Integrated Maritime Policy and looks forward to its effective implementation, as well as further genuinely practical proposals, measures and policies in this sector;

14. Stresses that the passenger rights issue should be assigned a more central place, especially protection of passengers when travelling long distances by bus and coach, as well as rail and ship passengers;
15. Stresses the importance of successful development of traffic management systems and urges the Commission to continue working towards the development of Single European Sky Air Traffic Management Research (SESAR) and the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS);
16. Stresses the need to protect biodiversity as such from human pressure, pollution, soil degradation and climate change and considers it essential to integrate biodiversity into other policy areas such as agriculture, soil protection or biofuels; calls for clear and measurable targets to be set at European level, making it possible to monitor the situation, and calls for urgent and concrete action in order to comply with the EU objective of halting biodiversity loss by 2010;
17. Reiterates the strategic significance of energy for the EU's future; in this respect considers that the Commission's initiatives to liberalise the energy market are needed to create an effective and competitive energy market; considers it necessary to distinguish between the evolution of the electricity market and that of the gas market;
18. Welcomes the Commission's proposal with the aim of implementing the utilisation of renewable energies in the European Union, but is aware that the success of this strategy mainly depends on the capacity of the European Union to persuade world partners, and in particular the main players, to converge on such a strategy, and therefore underlines that that the EU should speak with one voice and display solidarity in this field;
19. 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;

An integrated approach to migration

20. Considers that migration and social integration are two faces of the same coin and represent key challenges; in this respect supports the development of a common immigration policy, including education and integration policies, in order to establish a clear and safe framework for economic immigrants, notably skilled workers, which clarifies their obligations and rights;
21. Considers that the success of integration also depends on effective action against illegal migration and human trafficking; in this respect supports the action of the Commission to protect its external borders with common tools and believes that the External Border Agency can play a major role in this field through the new European Surveillance System;
22. Welcomes the proposal to complete the Common European Asylum Policy by 2010 and

considers that it is necessary to complement it with an EU 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;

Putting citizens first

Health, fight against discrimination, social aspects, Internet evolution

23. Supports the highly valuable initiatives undertaken by the Commission in order to guarantee the right of European citizens to health care and to set high quality standards for patient treatment; insists on the importance of the proposal for a directive on cross-border health care and calls on the Commission to avoid further delays in submitting the proposal; welcomes, therefore, initiatives on organ donation and transplants as well as the Recommendation on Patient Safety;
24. Recognises the European added value of tackling at a Community level determinants of rare diseases and sharing expertise and information, and urges the Commission to assign priority to and facilitate the development of a European policy on research into rare diseases;
25. 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 rapid approval of the climate and energy package;
26. Welcomes the Commission's proposal regarding the rights of children and therefore their protection, including the risks linked to incorrect and indiscriminate access to certain websites, and calls on the Commission to take them into account in its policy strategy;
27. Welcomes the Green Paper on urban transport, which summarises as many aspects of urban mobility as possible, and supports the comprehensive involvement of those concerned in the process of opinion-forming and the shaping of future EU policies on urban transport; underlines that more concrete answers need to be found concerning the role which the EU should play in questions of urban transport and how it should proceed;

Education

28. Considers that the Commission should continue to focus the attention of citizens on the importance of cultural diversity and therefore dialogue between cultures in an enlarged Union; considers that intercultural dialogue should also be reinforced outside the borders of Europe and become a bridge able to favour mutual comprehension and therefore help to prevent or resolve social and human conflicts;

Security of citizens

29. Supports the view that the EU must fight crime and violence in order to protect citizens, and that to this effect law enforcement and criminal investigation across the EU will be pursued; in this respect, supports also, since security is central to Europeans' wellbeing, the measures that the Commission wishes 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;

Europe as a world partner

30. Demands that the European Union enhance its political role in world affairs so that it can make a major contribution to ensuring peace and stability all over the world, in particular in certain key areas such as the Middle East, Kosovo and Afghanistan;
31. Considers that, within the diplomatic activity of the Quartet, the European Union, as the biggest donor of assistance to Palestinians, can play a major role in the Middle East in bringing an end to violence, promoting the resumption of the political process that resulted from the Annapolis Conference and persuading the parties in question to converge upon a basic dialogue to honour their obligations under the Road Map;
32. Considers that the EU Neighbourhood Policy is a key strategy for relations with the Union's Eastern and Southern Neighbours and will facilitate the creation and extension of a common area of peace, stability, security, respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and prosperity; stresses the importance of strengthening the ENP and urges the Commission to pay the utmost attention to democratic values when reviewing progress in the implementation of the existing ENP Action Plans and when renewing those Action Plans and Agreements about to expire;
33. Reiterates its request for a new and comprehensive Enhanced Agreement with Ukraine in 2007 to function as a successor to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and stresses that the new Agreement should include provisions on common values, enhanced cooperation on justice, freedom and security, and extensive provisions on energy and cooperation in a broad range of areas such as transport and the environment; calls on the Commission to conclude negotiations with Ukraine in 2009;
34. Notes that the current EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement expired in 2007 and repeats its call for the Commission to place democracy, human rights and freedom of expression at the core of the new EU-Russia Partnership Agreement;
35. Strongly condemns the Belarusian regime, which is the last dictatorship in Europe, for its arbitrary arrests of opposition activists and its clampdown on independent media, for the attacks on minority and human rights activists and religious leaders, the ill-treatment of detainees, disappearances, politically motivated persecution and other acts of repression that flout the basic principles of democracy and the rule of law;
36. Calls on the Council and Commission to create a programme of scholarships, visits and placements for NGOs and human rights and minority activists from Belarus; stresses the importance of providing high quality and independent information to the public in Belarus; urges the Council and Commission to grant financial assistance to the free media broadcasting initiatives such as BELSAT TV that are currently financed only by Poland; calls on European political parties and political groups in the EP to increase their contacts with, and political support for, the Belarusian opposition;
37. Underlines that the transatlantic relationship must have a priority status that should be

reinforced by a strong framework agreement; reiterates that the EU and the USA, as powers of global significance, have a responsibility to cooperate in order 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;

38. Underlines the need for an EU Baltic Sea Strategy in order to increase cooperation and the integration of the countries in this area;

Enlargement

39. Underlines that the Union's enlargement policy should be aimed at extending peace and stability, prosperity, democracy, human rights and the rule of law across Europe; supports the Commission's opinion that consolidation, conditionality and communication are the main guiding principles for the EU Enlargement Strategy;
40. Stresses that accession negotiations with Croatia are entering a decisive stage; hopes that increased negotiating efforts by Croatia and enhanced support by the EU institutions can lead to a final decision on Croatia's EU membership before the next European elections in 2009 once all the requirements for accession are met;
41. Calls on the Commission, through the medium of the Stabilisation and Association Process, to support and maintain the progress of the Western Balkan States towards EU membership; calls on the Commission to support the development of Kosovo as an independent State, in particular through the deployment of Community instruments and support for Kosovo's reform process;

Development policy

42. Urges the Commission to continue to support the efforts of all the developing countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in order, first of all, to reduce extreme poverty, and to combat HIV/AIDS and malaria, reduce child mortality and achieve universal primary education;
43. Welcomes the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid as an expression of solidarity between people and a fundamental means of responding to emergencies in order to preserve human life and dignity;

Trade policy

44. Notes with great interest the Commission's competitiveness agenda for the future EU trade policy, as well as the initiatives linked to it; considers, in this framework, that a comprehensive new strategy on China, a global strategy for protecting intellectual property rights, the renewal of the EU's market access strategy, stringent measures to combat 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 2009;
45. Calls on the Commission to conclude the different ongoing negotiations on the Economic

Partnership Agreements in order to sign them with the ACP regional groups; confirms its belief that EPAs are an instrument for promoting sustainable development and progress in the ACP economies and supporting regional integration, poverty eradication and gradual integration of the ACP countries into the world economy;

Horizontal issues

Budgetary issues

46. Calls on the Commission to make continuous efforts to raise 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 improve sound management of the budget and achieve the best value for money;
47. Insists that the Commission should take particular care in using financial resources by focusing budgetary and human resources better, and emphasises the need for appropriate financial resources to be available and for coherence between strategic priorities and budgetary decisions;

Better Law-Making/Making policy work

48. Considers that better regulation is also a key component of the response to globalisation and therefore calls on the Commission to take forward discussions with key partners on regulatory cooperation, convergence and equivalence of rules;
49. Is aware that the development and implementation of EU policy need partnership and commitment by the Member States for their reform programmes; considers, however, that the Commission has a central task in helping Member States to actively promote and develop major EU policies; considers that the renewed Lisbon Strategy is an example of the role the Commission can play;

Bringing Europe closer to its citizens

50. Reiterates its call for the Commission to step up its efforts to communicate with European citizens and to explain the European project, as well as the new Treaty, in order to raise the profile of the EU, including the European Parliament, in this process;
51. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the parliaments of the Member States.