



Plenary sitting

B8-0896/2016

4.7.2016

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 37(3) of the Rules of Procedure and the Framework
Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the European
Commission

on the Commission Work Programme 2017
(2016/2773(RSP))

Vicky Ford
on behalf of the ECR Group

**European Parliament resolution on the Commission Work Programme 2017
(2016/2773(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Declaration of the European Commission on a subsidiarity implementation mechanism and a burden reduction implementation mechanism of 19 February 2016,
 - having regard to the European Council Declaration on competitiveness of 19 February 2016,
 - having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on Better Law-Making,
 - having regard to the final report of 24 July 2014 of the High Level Group on Administrative Burdens, entitled ‘Cutting Red Tape in Europe – Legacy and Outlook’,
 - having regard to its resolution of 12 April 2016 on ‘Towards improved single market regulation’¹,
 - having regard to its resolution of 12 April 2016 on the Annual reports 2012-2013 on subsidiarity and proportionality²,
 - having regard to Rule 37(3) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Member States of the European Union face significant economic challenges in the decades ahead in a rapidly changing and increasingly challenging global marketplace;
- B. whereas only competitive economies will be able to create the jobs and generate the prosperity that raise the living standards of their citizens, fund investment in the future, offer quality education and opportunities for young people, improve health care and retirement provision, and provide for better public services;
- C. whereas the Member States of the European Union need to improve levels of productivity and innovation to meet the economic challenges they face;
- D. whereas the Member States of the European Union need to bear down on public and private debt to provide a strong foundation for long-term sustainable economic growth;
- E. whereas public opinion has grown increasingly wary of a European Union which seems to be taking on powers and responsibilities that would be more properly exercised at the level of its Member States or their regional and local authorities, or by citizens themselves;

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0105.

² Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0103.

- F. whereas the citizens of the European Union clearly seek a Union with a light touch which facilitates cooperation amongst its Member States in areas where this can add value but above all respects the essential principles of subsidiarity and proportionality;
1. Calls on the Commission to prioritise measures in 2017 that will be conducive to long-term sustainable growth, generating jobs and prosperity;
 2. Endorses the Commission declaration of 19 February 2016 on a subsidiarity implementation mechanism and a burden reduction implementation mechanism, which states that ‘the Commission will establish a mechanism to review the body of existing EU legislation for its compliance with the principle of subsidiarity and proportionality’; urges the Commission to implement in full the recommendations set out in Parliament’s resolution of 12 April 2016 on the Annual reports 2012-2013 on subsidiarity and proportionality;
 3. Calls on the Commission to implement with ambition the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making, and particularly the sections relating to the SME and competitiveness tests as part of the impact assessments, the setting of burden reduction targets, the Annual Burden Survey and the work of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board; calls on the Commission to ensure that microenterprises are exempted as far as possible from all legislative proposals so that new start-ups and entrepreneurs can be encouraged; asks the Commission to ensure that its work programme implements the recommendations set out in Parliament’s resolution of 12 April 2016 on ‘Towards improved single market regulation’;
 4. Emphasises that reaching new trade deals is essential as part of this growth agenda in order to develop an outward-looking competitive European economic framework able to deliver tangible benefits and lower prices for consumers and generate new jobs;
 5. Calls on the Commission to focus on developing a modernised and effective budget; notes that the EU’s accounts have consistently been signed off as giving a ‘true and fair’ view of the finances of the European Union but that concerns remain about the effectiveness of expenditure, and calls, therefore, on the Commission to re-prioritise thoroughly its approach to budgetary control, where insufficient progress is being made to address an issue of key concern for European public opinion; stresses the need for more efficient use of taxpayers’ money that involves Member States fully in addressing concerns about mismanagement and fraud; calls for existing policies to be regularly evaluated, reviewed and adapted when necessary to ensure they meet the needs of the future and a rapidly changing technological and economic environment; emphasises the importance of such evaluations being undertaken by fully independent and objective bodies;

PART 2: SPECIFIC PROPOSALS FOR THE WORK PROGRAMME

‘A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment’

The subsidiarity and proportionality implementation mechanism and the burden reduction implementation mechanism

6. Believes the two new mechanisms on subsidiarity and proportionality implementation

and on burden reduction (the SPBR mechanisms), outlined in the Commission's declaration of 19 February 2016, will enhance the Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT) platform and will contribute to economic growth, job creation and increased prosperity;

7. Notes that the European Council in its declaration on competitiveness of 19 February 2016 also calls for 'burden reduction targets in key sectors'; asks that the Commission make burden reduction in line with these declarations a central feature of the Work Programme 'letter of intent' for 2017 in order to set a positive reform agenda for the Work Programme itself and the anticipated joint declaration on annual institutional programming;
8. Urges the Commission to include the following items as priorities in the 'programme of work' for the SPBR mechanisms:
 - Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems,
 - Directive 2003/88/EC concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time,
 - Directive 2008/104/EC on temporary agency work,
 - Directive 96/71/EC concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services,
 - Directive 2012/27/EU on energy efficiency,
 - Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH),
 - Regulation (EU) No 528/2012 concerning the making available on the market and use of biocidal products,
 - Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market,
 - Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 on maximum residue levels of pesticides in or on food and feed of plant and animal origin,
 - Council Directive 91/676/EEC concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources,
 - Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006 concerning management measures for the sustainable exploitation of fishery resources in the Mediterranean Sea,
 - the Small Business Act,
 - Regulation (EU) No 165/2014 on tachographs in road transport,
 - Directive 2014/95/EU as regards disclosure of non-financial and diversity information by certain large undertakings and groups,

- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 815/2012 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EU) No 904/2010, as regards special schemes for non-established taxable persons supplying telecommunications, broadcasting or electronic services to non-taxable persons;
- 9. Calls on the Commission to withdraw the proposal for legislation on improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges;
- 10. Calls on the Commission to review the proposal on a targeted review of the Qualification Directive 2013/32/EU on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection;
- 11. Calls for the priorities in the programme of work to be proposed by the end of 2016 under the new subsidiarity and proportionality mechanism and the burden reduction mechanism to be included in the 2017 Work Programme;

Better law-making

- 12. Notes that the Commission has agreed to set a net target for the reduction of economic costs linked to regulatory burdens for businesses; calls for this to be set at 25 % by 2020 in line with previous ambitions with a longer term target for halving the burden of existing EU regulations by 2030, in cooperation with the parliaments of the Member States; stresses that this overall target should also include the costs of compliance and a significant effort should also be made regarding compliance costs; asks that interim targets be set by each new Commission, in consultation with Parliament and the European Council; believes that REFIT represents an important step towards simplifying legislation, reducing administrative burdens of regulation for businesses and eliminating barriers for growth and job creation; strongly encourages the Commission to apply, where possible, the formula ‘for each new standard created, two old standards are to be repealed’ by considering the benefits of introducing regulatory offsetting, whereby new rules that add to administrative and regulatory burdens can only be imposed if a corresponding double cut in existing burdens can be identified;
- 13. Pursuant to the relevant provisions of the new interinstitutional agreement (IIA), calls on the Commission as a matter of urgency to come forward with proposals establishing targets for the reduction of burdens in key sectors as soon as possible; calls on the Commission to come forward with the method it intends to use to identify the key sectors for which burden reduction targets will be established;
- 14. Underlines the importance of the agreed Annual Burden Survey (ABS) as part of the IIA on better law-making as an important tool to identify and monitor, in a clear and transparent manner, the results of the Union’s efforts to avoid and reduce any overregulation and administrative burdens, which should include a list relating specifically to SMEs; believes that the ABS must be used to identify those burdens imposed by individual Commission legislative proposals and acts and by individual Member States;
- 15. Notes that compliance with subsidiarity and proportionality is currently only evaluated at the start of the legislative process; underlines, therefore, the need for the introduction of a subsidiarity and proportionality check at the conclusion of the legislative process

and in advance of the adoption of a final text, which would help to ensure that respect for these principles is maintained during the legislative process; urges the Commission to use a ‘cooling off’ period whenever possible after the conclusion of trilogue negotiations for the completion of an impact assessment and a subsidiarity check, and in the interests of transparency;

16. Calls on the Commission to recognise that the better regulation agenda has a local/regional dimension, which is not necessarily addressed through subsidiarity, and asks the Commission to expand its regulatory impact assessment processes (different from a ‘territorial impact assessment’) to examine the financial and administrative impact of existing and new standards on local/regional governments;
17. Calls on the Commission to review urgently the Small Business Act to see how it can work effectively in parallel with the better regulation agenda;
18. Suggests that, as part of its better regulation agenda, the Commission should look at innovative ways to achieve policy outcomes without legislation, by using, for example, behavioural economics to examine and influence behaviour;
19. Calls on the Commission to carry out consultations with stakeholders at all stages of the legislative process, including at the earliest stage of the legislative process to prevent unintended consequences;
20. Asks the Commission to review the operation of the REFIT platform to ensure it is transparent and user-friendly; calls for an evaluation in 2017 of its effectiveness and achievements;
21. Asks the Commission to prepare in 2017 an evaluation of the independence of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board in fulfilling its role in supervising and providing objective advice on respective impact assessments, and to outline what follow-up action may be required;
22. Regarding Article 155 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), calls on the social partners in the context of current and future framework agreements, including the 2012 framework agreement in the hairdressing sector, to embrace the better regulation tools, increase the use of impact assessments in their negotiations and refer agreements proposing legislative action to the Commission’s Regulatory Scrutiny Board;
23. Calls on the Commission to identify the progress and achievements in the fields of what have been identified as the ‘Top Ten’ most burdensome laws for SMEs, including the working time and temporary agency directives, and to prioritise action in taking these forward;
24. Highlights the recent trend of companies returning production and services to Europe and the opportunities this brings for job creation; calls on the Commission to consider how the EU can help businesses take advantage of the opportunities offered by this ‘reshoring’;
25. Calls on the Commission, in the context of the review of the Health and Safety acquis,

to embrace the better regulation principles in order to ensure that the new framework remains proportionate and adaptable to the changing conditions in the workplace; believes that provisions should be made, for example in the Framework Directive, for an evaluation to be carried out every ten years;

26. Calls on the Commission to enhance the involvement of national parliaments and consult them extensively when considering reviews and repeals of EU legislation; calls for an automatic sunset clause for all EU legislation, which would trigger a targeted independent impact assessment, which may in turn result in a review or a repeal of the legislation; highlights that the impact assessment may also examine, inter alia, elements such as compliance with subsidiarity and proportionality, burdens on Member States, businesses, in particular SMEs, and stakeholders, and an evaluation of the potential repatriation of an EU competence; notes that unless the impact assessment can demonstrate a continued relevance at EU level for the legislation, there would be an automatic assumption of repeal;
27. Expresses disappointment at the response of the Commission to national parliaments in instances where yellow cards have been issued; believes that it is necessary for the Commission to implement the recommendations in Parliament's resolution of 12 April 2016 on the Annual reports 2012-2013 on subsidiarity and proportionality, step up dialogue with national parliaments and respond comprehensively to any concerns raised by them in any published opinion; considers that it is also necessary for the Commission to appear before the relevant committee or committees of Parliament to explain its position in detail regarding subsidiarity opinions;
28. Urges the Commission to step up its political and legislative dialogue with national and, where applicable, regional parliaments in a coordinated manner, in order to fully evaluate compliance of potential and existing EU proposals with their competences and the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality; notes that this procedure should take place in the consultation and preparatory phases of legislative planning prior to the publication of EU proposals and should be continually monitored to ensure existing legislation is regularly assessed; notes that, when cooperating with their counterparts in other Member States, national parliaments have a number of instruments at their disposal in this respect and through which the Commission will be required to take significant action and address the calls from national parliaments, including a right of binding legislative initiative ('green card') as proposed by the COSAC, the 'red card' by virtue of the subsidiarity principle, which would allow 16 Member States to prevent the advancement of a piece of EU legislation, closer involvement in reviews of delegated and implementing acts, and a right to initiate a parliamentary inquiry into European matters, including financial transparency;
29. Calls on the Commission to help facilitate the implementation and ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons who are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled;
30. Opposes the proposed 'Gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges' legislation, which fails to respect the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality; underlines that Member States are best placed to provide solutions which are suitable for their specific culture and business environment,

rather than being subjected to a counter-productive one-size-fits-all quota approach for all Member States;

Financial Services

31. Calls for efforts to speed up and prioritise completion of the Capital Markets Union (CMU) owing to its role in stimulating growth and global competitiveness; stresses the importance of performing a cumulative impact assessment of economic legislation to identify legislative inconsistencies that would act as barriers to a CMU;
32. Demands a stronger focus on the global competitiveness of the EU's financial sectors when drafting policies; notes, furthermore, the need for enhanced coordination of the European Supervisory Authorities (ESAs) and the Commission with international bodies to promote EU interests;
33. Calls on the Commission to monitor regularly the implementation of financial legislation to evaluate implementation problems, unintended consequences and elements which could be reformed, updated or removed; stresses the role that the ESAs and the Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM) have to play in achieving better regulation targets; in this regard, notes that ESAs should work closely with national experts and stakeholders when developing technical standards in order to prevent unintended consequences;
34. Stresses that any proposals for additional legislation should be subject to a thorough impact assessment and cost-benefit analysis by the Commission in line with its better regulation agenda, in order to ensure that proposals are only made if the intended effects cannot be achieved by non-legislative means; calls on the Commission to fulfil its new commitment to reviewing the body of EU financial regulation and the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality and eagerly awaits the results in the area of financial services; notes, furthermore, the importance of ensuring appropriate division of competences between EU and national level, bearing in mind the expertise and knowledge of national supervisors regarding their local market;
35. Welcomes the work of the Commission and the Member States to actively promote the fight against tax fraud, tax evasion, aggressive tax planning and the use of tax havens; in this regard, urges the Commission to take into consideration the global nature of tax fraud, tax evasion, aggressive tax planning and the use of tax havens and to ensure that any measures taken protect the competitiveness of EU companies whilst ensuring sufficient transparency, in order to increase consumer confidence in the fairness of the EU Member States' taxation systems;
36. Calls for timely implementation of existing Banking Union legislation and for enhancing dialogue with sector experts to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of adopted legislation; recalls that several Member States have still not transposed the bail-in laws and therefore urges the Commission to ensure swift and full transposition of the Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive (BRRD); urges the Commission to carry out a thorough assessment of risks in the context of the European deposit insurance scheme (EDIS) proposal; notes, in this respect, that this assessment should include a comprehensive overview of the state of play of the infrastructure behind, and the financing of, national Deposit Guarantee Schemes; notes that the interests of Member

States who do not participate in the Banking Union or the eurozone must also be respected;

37. Calls for more proportionate measures for smaller banks in order for reporting requirements to be tailored according to bank size, thereby avoiding smaller banks reporting more information than is deemed necessary by supervisors to be able to understand the banks' risk profile and potential impact on financial stability; notes, furthermore, that the future Net Stable Funding Ratio could be tailored according to banks' business models so that smaller banks that are not as reliant on wholesale funding could be exempted;
38. Asks the Commission to consider ways to complete the European Monetary and Economic Union (EMU) other than the direction set out in the Five Presidents' Report; opposes the creation of a budgetary capacity for the eurozone; suggests that a credible commitment to the no-bailout principle in Article 125 TFEU would reinforce the sovereignty and responsibility of Member States in terms of social, economic and fiscal policies;

'A Connected Digital Single Market'

39. Supports the Commission's prioritisation of the Digital Single Market owing to the opportunities that digital activities can generate for jobs, creation of new start-ups and scale-ups, growth and innovation; recognises the importance of the digital transformation of EU industry for creating jobs, boosting productivity and enhancing competitiveness and thus delivering growth; underlines that 2017 will be a year of delivery, as legislative proposals will need to be concluded and implementation work undertaken in the Member States;
40. Recommends that before launching legislative proposals in the digital area the Commission should examine best practices in Member States and internationally, encourage industry-led measures, focus on the implementation of existing laws, and modernise existing national and EU law where appropriate, and that it should initiate new legislation only if absolutely necessary;
41. Calls on the Commission to remove red tape and unjustified or disproportionate regulatory or non-regulatory obstacles in order to fully exploit the potential of a digital transformation of industry and cross-border e-commerce; stresses that measures should not be protectionist but designed to make the digital environment attractive for European businesses to develop and companies seeking to set up and trade in Europe, and also for consumers and other users;
42. Regrets the significant concerns regarding tax measures in the digital economy, particularly Value-Added Tax (VAT), that have not been addressed by the Commission; repeats the call to propose the introduction of a common EU-wide simplification measure (VAT threshold) to help small e-commerce business; underlines the urgency of the need to address this issue; reiterates in this context that taxation policy is a competence of Member States;
43. Asks the Commission to support a strong intellectual property regime and greater enforcement of intellectual property rights, which would stimulate competitiveness and

support innovative businesses, reward creators and deliver benefits for users of copyright works; welcomes the ‘follow the money’ approach and emphasises that the Commission, together with the Member States, should promote awareness and due diligence along the supply chain and encourage the exchange of information and best practices, in order to combat infringements of intellectual property rights on a commercial scale, as well as enhanced public and private sector cooperation;

‘A Resilient Energy Union with a Forward-Looking Climate Change Policy’

44. Strongly supports the conclusions of the Commission communication (COM(2016)0062) assessing the implications of the Paris Agreement, which maintain the European Council’s headline targets and architecture for the 2030 framework on climate and energy; cautions, however, against any future adjustment of the EU’s 2030 emission reduction commitments as part of the first UNFCCC global stocktake in 2023, which could negatively affect the certainty that companies and investors need to drive the low-carbon transition; believes it is imperative that provisions to protect industrial sectors at risk of carbon leakage be maintained;
45. Calls on the Commission to provide, through its future electricity market design, for a truly level playing field between all energy sources contributing to a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the EU;
46. Calls on the Commission to provide a detailed impact assessment focusing on socio-economic consequences of the new electricity market design, particularly in the CEE region, which is likely to bear higher energy transition costs than other EU Member States;
47. Believes that the future electricity market design needs to value a range of different components to develop a fully functioning system; recognises in this regard the importance of maximising opportunities for electricity storage within Europe and calls on the Commission to facilitate a non-distortive and investment-friendly framework for different types of electricity storage technologies;
48. Has concerns regarding the implementation of the Energy Efficiency Directive and calls on the Commission to work with Member States with consistent guidelines to ensure effective implementation; supports the ‘efficiency first’ principle where appropriate and believes targets should be proportionate and realistic; calls on the Commission to ensure that the EU’s climate and energy related legislation is itself efficient and proportionate rather than competing and overlapping;
49. Recalls that greenhouse gas emissions from aviation were incorporated into the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) on 1 January 2012 requiring all aircraft operators under the scope of the ETS to obtain carbon emission allowances; notes the adoption of two ‘Stop-the-Clock’ Decisions in 2013 and 2014, temporarily reducing the scope of the EU ETS to exclude international flights in order to allow the [International Civil Aviation Organization \(ICAO\)](#) time to develop a global market-based measure (GMBM) for reducing international aviation emissions; recalls that this exemption will expire in 2017; calls on the Commission to produce a report and recommendations in sufficient time to review the decision taken by the 39th ICAO Assembly in September/October 2016 on a GMBM and adapt the requirements of the Directive by

means of a new legislative proposal;

‘A Deeper and Fairer Internal Market with a Strengthened Industrial Base’

50. Supports the commitment contained in the Single Market Strategy to ensuring Europe remains at the forefront of standards development globally; encourages standardisation which is compatible with an international approach either through the development of global international standards or the recognition of equivalent international standards where appropriate; calls on the Commission to ensure that the Joint Initiative remains driven by a bottom-up, industry-identified need and delivers standards which demonstrate market relevance;
51. Believes that more work is required to ensure that a well-publicised and accessible appeals process applies to standards-setting; encourages the Commission, in conjunction with the national and European standards bodies, to build on best practice to improve appeals mechanisms;
52. Calls on the Commission to present an annual overview of non-tariff barriers affecting the single market internally and an analysis of the means for tackling them in order to unleash the still untapped potential of the single market;
53. Points out that regulations that impose restrictions on retail and wholesale activities which run counter to EU law and that are disproportionate can create significant barriers to entry, leading to fewer new outlet openings, hampering competition and leading to higher prices for consumers; calls on the Commission to thoroughly analyse operational restrictions to retail and wholesale in the single market;
54. Calls on the Commission to act decisively to improve the application of mutual recognition; expects, in that context, the Commission’s plans to increase awareness among competent authorities and to revise the Mutual Recognition Regulation and accompanying guidance in order to resolve issues of implementation or application of the mutual recognition principle, taking into account the need to ensure consumer protection;
55. Highlights that future actions, such as the proposed services passport, should not lead to additional administrative burdens, but should tackle non-tariff barriers and advance mutual recognition;
56. Encourages the Commission to bring forward the data analytics tool in the Single Market Strategy, which could improve the monitoring of transposition of single market legislation;
57. Call on the Commission to include the following principles in its upcoming review of the telecoms framework:
 - a. legislation must remain principles-based, agile and future-proof rather than seeking to predetermine industry’s technological trajectory;
 - b. competition stimulates, rather than undermines investment; NRAs must retain the ability to support the varying models of competition as appropriate to their national

markets, particularly with regard to geographic areas;

- c. telecoms markets will continue to be characterised by structurally and historically different national markets, therefore the same solutions will not always be appropriate for every market;
 - d. spectrum efficiency should be maximised but harmonisation is a means, rather than an end in itself; conditions should therefore be provided to encourage continuous as well as industry-led developments in spectrum use rather than seeking to pre-define its shape;
58. Awaits proposals on the establishment of the European Innovation Council which must be accompanied by a thorough impact assessment and be funded within the current MFF ceilings; takes note of the initial results of Horizon 2020 and urges the Commission in its mid-term review to draw appropriate and evidence-based conclusions based on the results, particularly with regard to success rates, grant process and the cost model;
59. Encourages the Commission to implement a Space Strategy for Europe, addressing the need for a globally competitive EU space sector; underlines that market uptake of the Galileo and Copernicus programmes is an opportunity to fulfil the potential of European start-ups and other businesses in developing space based services and applications for innovations, growth and jobs;

Reasonable and Balanced Free Trade Agreements

60. Requests that the Commission continue with mandated work on the outstanding issues to be resolved following the outcome of the 10th Ministerial Conference in Nairobi; notes, however, that the World Trade Organization (WTO) must continue to represent a flexible and dynamic forum for negotiations among WTO member states for further trade integration among willing countries; supports efforts by the WTO to increase its effectiveness and accountability; asks that, following a period of reflection, the EU begin work on adding specific new issues to negotiations in Geneva, including, but not limited to, issues such as investment, state owned enterprises and services;
61. Requests the formal launching of negotiations for ambitious, balanced and high standard economic integration agreements covering trade and investment with Australia and New Zealand, which should be concluded in ambitious timeframes given not only shared interests and values between the EU and New Zealand and Australia, but also similar standards concerning labour and social rights and the protection of the environment;
62. Calls on the Commission to take advantage of the current momentum in MERCOSUR countries, notably in Argentina, and to unblock the EU-MERCOSUR trade negotiations in order to reach a comprehensive and ambitious agreement; supports the modernising of the EU agreements with Mexico and Chile, countries with key ties in the Latin America region, notably as members of the dynamic regional group of the Pacific Alliance; asks that following completion of these negotiations, the Commission reflect on the possibility of a region-to-region agreement between the EU and the Pacific Alliance;

63. Recognises the importance of increasing trade and investment relations with newly industrialised countries such as India, Malaysia, Taiwan and China, and instructs the Commission to ensure it does all it can to negotiate high-quality trade and investment agreements with these countries; further requests that, once the European Court of Justice has delivered its opinion on the Free Trade Agreement with Singapore, that it ensure that the Agreement reaches the Member States and the European Parliament as quickly as possible;
64. Recognises the contribution that the GSP+ scheme makes in raising human rights and labour standards and increasing the opportunity for EU investment in beneficiary countries; insists that the GSP+ as an instrument that can promote human rights will only be effective if properly applied; requests that the Commission fulfil its obligations under Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 and provide a comprehensive review by the end of 2017 including response actions, if required, should a beneficiary fail to comply with its GSP+ undertakings; looks forward to a possible successful request for GSP+ status from Sri Lanka, provided it fulfils the necessary criteria;
65. Notes the continued issue of the long period required by the Commission to scrub and translate legal texts following the conclusion of negotiations, compared to other agreements worldwide; considers that, given the rapidly evolving nature of the world trade environment, and the pressing need to further open markets for EU businesses and consumers, that further reflection, as requested previously by Parliament, be given to improving and streamlining the process of legal scrubbing and translation with a view to ensuring that all legal texts are presented to the Member States and Parliament for the signing and ratification processes in the shortest time possible; requests the Commission to report to Parliament by no later than 31 March 2017 with specific proposals in this area;
66. Supports the continued insistence of the Commission, backed by the Member States and Parliament, that all ongoing negotiations for free trade agreements include specific chapters designed to provide specific legal and technical measures to improve the ability of small and medium-sized enterprises to engage in trade and investment, an issue of crucial importance given the proliferation of integrated global supply chains in world trade patterns;
67. Highlights the continued importance of inward and outward investment to the EU economy and the need for the EU's businesses, of all shapes and sizes, to be protected fully when investing in third-country markets; stresses that investment protection is a necessary element of the EU's trade policy, while recognising the principle of the right to regulate, the need for transparency in proceedings and a system based on clearly defined rules; asks that the Commission continue to ensure investment protection for EU investors in future negotiations;
68. Recognises that free trade agreements should be monitored and properly enforced following their application and beyond to ensure not only proper analysis and evaluation of their trade effects but proper respect of agreed rules, disciplines and measures; notes the lack of focus by the Commission on the implementation of trade agreements currently and underlines the crucial importance of ensuring trade partners keep promises entered into in trade agreements; calls for the Commission to include

Parliament throughout this process;

69. Is convinced that, until trade partners meet all five EU criteria required to qualify as a market economy, the EU should use a non-standard methodology in full compliance with WTO law in order to preserve the competitiveness of European businesses and to continue our struggle against any form of unfair competition;
70. Calls on the Commission to increase its offensive trade measures in relation to opening and sustaining new markets and to focus on both tariff and non-tariff issues; stresses that the EU's high food safety, health and animal welfare standards, which are vital to ensure the confidence of EU consumers, should not be compromised or negotiated away;
71. Calls on the Commission to secure a level playing field in trade deals that the EU is seeking to conclude with third countries, identifying a sensitive list of products which may be vulnerable to excessive pressure, for any number of reasons; requests that such products which may be sensitive to liberalisation are given appropriate special and differential treatment in trade agreements;

'An Area of Justice and Fundamental Rights Based on Mutual Trust'

72. Calls on the Commission to review existing legislation in the area of cybercrime, and come forward with a proposal which establishes a clear legal framework for the relationship between private companies and law enforcement authorities in the fight against organised crime and radicalisation online;
73. Calls on the Commission to come forward with a proposal on cross-border cooperation regarding the exchange of information on the traceability of terrorist financing;
74. Calls for the swift adoption of the revised Smart Borders proposal to help establish effective and external border checks in the EU;

'Towards a New Policy on Migration'

75. Insists that the main considerations for migration policy should be ensuring public confidence, preserving the integrity of the Schengen area, and maintaining internal security;
76. Calls on the Commission to evaluate the current regulations and directives in the field of migration, particularly the Family Reunification Directive, the Asylum Procedures Directive and the Qualifications Directive, which constitute unwanted pull factors as regards asylum seeking in the EU;
77. Stresses that the revision of the Dublin III Regulation must hold the main principles of the regulation, and calls for the Commission to come forward with specific and concrete proposals to tackle secondary movement of asylum seekers;
78. Stresses that any upcoming proposals on economic migration from non-EU/EEA countries should primarily be a competence of the Member States and should also seek to regulate the quantity and quality of economic migration from non-EU/EEA-

countries;

79. Calls on the Commission to closely monitor the implementation by Turkey of the EU-Turkey deal;
80. Calls on the Commission to establish monitoring and implementation reports on the disbursement and national spending of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (ASIF) and the Internal Security Fund (ISF), and to fully monitor and evaluate the use of EU funding given to third countries in the area of asylum;
81. Stresses that the Commission should regularly monitor and evaluate a possible visa-liberalisation agreement with Turkey in order to ensure that there are not drastic increases in the number of visa over-stayers and persons seeking international protection originating from Turkey;
82. Asks the Commission to fully monitor the implementation of the E.U. Coast and Border Guard (ECBG) once established, so as to ensure that rather than only managing the influx at the external border, the Agency plays an active role in returns and readmission and in reducing the overall number of failed asylum seekers residing on the territory of the EU;
83. Calls on the Commission to follow up its proposal on a returns travel document with ambitious plans for returns to third countries such as Pakistan, Morocco and Algeria;
84. Calls on the Commission to conduct a clear country-by-country analysis and establish individual strategies regarding the 'more for more' and 'less for less' approach for third countries with regard to EU financial assistance in the fight against irregular migration and the trafficking of human beings;

'A Stronger Global Actor'

85. Calls for regular reviews of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) to ensure it addresses the constantly changing situations on the EU's eastern and southern borders; further insists that the work and budgets of the European External Action Service be properly scrutinised and accounted for; believes that this evaluation should not only focus on whether the money is spent correctly, but also whether ENP objectives are being achieved;
86. Calls on the Council and Commission, in light of current developments, to continuously and critically review all accession negotiations, their progress and effectiveness, and where necessary amend the speed and strategy;
87. Recognises that the promotion of human rights is among the EU's foreign policy objectives with particular emphasis on areas such as religious freedom, freedom of expression, political freedoms, the rights of women and children, and the rights of minority groups;
88. Calls for continued diplomatic pressure, including the use of targeted sanctions against individuals, groups and the Russian Government, in order to peacefully resolve the conflict in Ukraine; insists on strict adherence to the non-recognition policy regarding

Russian-occupied Crimea;

89. Recognises NATO as the cornerstone of European defence and security policy;
90. Encourages further international cooperation in seeking a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which achieves a secure and universally recognised Israel living alongside a sovereign and viable Palestinian state; encourages further efforts to reinvigorate the peace process between Turkey and the Kurds in order to develop trust and confidence between the two sides, and in order to begin to address wider regional issues affecting Kurdish people;

Development issues

91. Invites the Commission to work with the Member States towards achieving the Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) target of 0.7 % of GNP;
92. Calls on the European institutions to establish a clear, structured, transparent and accountable framework governing partnerships and alliances with the private sector in developing countries; furthermore calls for the setting up at EU level of sectorial multi-stakeholder platforms, bringing together the private sector, civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations, think tanks, partner governments, donors and other stakeholders, in order to communicate about opportunities to participate in public-private partnerships, exchange best practices, provide technical support as regards the legal framework and expected challenges arising from collaborative development interventions;
93. Calls on the Commission to come up with innovative approaches to life-saving assistance and humanitarian aid, and to focus more consistently on crisis prevention and early warning mechanisms; urges the Commission to consider potential partnerships with the private sector to respond to current and future humanitarian needs; stresses the importance of bridging the gap between relief and long-term development assistance and of involving the 'new' emerging economies which are growing in profile, impact and capacity in humanitarian assistance talks;
94. Calls for an expansion of the current European Investment Bank (EIB) external lending mandate, in order to increase its role in achieving sustainable development and, in particular, to take a more active part in the new private sector strategy, through blending, co-financing of projects and local private sector development; calls, furthermore, for greater transparency and accountability in partnerships and projects associated with the EIB; calls on the EIB and the other development financial institutions of Member States to ensure that companies which receive their support do not participate in tax evasion;
95. Asks the Commission to continue the work with Member States in supporting third countries in eradicating practices that are harmful to women and girls including child and forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), honour killings, forced sterilisation, rape in conflict, stoning and all other forms of brutality; urges the Commission to work with the European External Action Service (EEAS) to improve the support available for victims of such brutality;

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Budgetary issues

96. Believes that one of the fundamental principles guiding the Commission when it draws up the estimates for the EU budget should be ‘EU added value’; urges the Commission to focus on the financing of measures where the contribution from the EU budget provides more demonstrable benefit than financing by individual Member States; believes that the EU budget has a significant role to play in the success or otherwise of the Commission’s proposed mechanism to review the body of EU legislation for its compliance with subsidiarity and proportionality;
97. Points out that a culture change is required in the approach to EU spending, where too much focus is currently placed on the absorption of funds and compliance with regulations rather than added value or performance; urges the Commission to commit to a thorough re-evaluation of the EU budget priorities on the basis of ex-post evaluations and robust performance indicators; believes that the use of performance reserves, such as those currently used in structural funds, could be increased and utilised in other areas of EU funding; considers the Budget Focused on Results strategy to be a promising development in this regard, and urges the Commission to incorporate fully a performance-based budgeting approach into the annual budgetary procedure;
98. Notes the on-going mid-term review of Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework (MFF) for the years 2014-2020; stresses that this review and a possible legislative proposal on revision of the MFF must be awaited before altering the commitment of the European Parliament to the financial ceilings set out in the 2013 Regulation for the duration of the current MFF in the interest of budgetary predictability;
99. Urges the Commission to use the mid-term review of the MFF to shift funds away from policy areas with less European added value such as culture, citizenship and media and instead reorient the EU budget further towards jobs, growth and competitiveness; notes that while the Union is facing new and unforeseen challenges, the EU budget must not lose sight of this fundamental priority; calls on the Commission to use this opportunity to simplify the applicable rules of existing programmes in this field, such as the Horizon 2020 programme, in line with the Better Regulation Agenda;
100. Notes that the Commission intends to come forward with a proposal for the next MFF before 1 January 2018; implores the Commission to decide on the priorities for the multiannual budget in accordance with the principle of EU added value, before tabling any proposals on the size of the EU budget; urges the Commission to align the next MFF with the political cycles of the Commission and Parliament in order to improve democratic accountability and transparency of the multiannual budget;
101. Notes the Commission will consider proposals from the High Level Group on Own Resources, including any new candidate for own resources; believes, however, that the own resources system risks creating apathy among EU citizens; strongly opposes, therefore, the introduction of any new form of direct European tax; favours, instead, the development of a more simple and transparent resources system based on the Member States’ GNI-based contributions;

102. Requests the Commission to establish monitoring and implementation reports on the disbursement and national spending of AMIF and ISF funds;

Environmental issues

103. Draws attention to the Commission's legal obligation, according to Article 117(4) of the REACH Regulation, to report on the implementation and functioning of the Regulation by 1 June 2017 and notes that this report will also serve as the REFIT evaluation of the Regulation; underlines that the evaluation should ascertain the effectiveness and efficiency of the legislation, its coherence both internally and with other EU policies, whether it has achieved EU added value, its impact on businesses, particularly SMEs, and their ability to make long-term investments, as well as its effect on industry and possible relocation of EU-based chemicals production; calls on the Commission to bring forward implementing regulations that streamline and simplify the authorisation procedure for applications concerning uses of substances in low volumes (under 10 tonnes per year) and legacy spare parts;
104. Calls on the Commission to define 'lightly processed food', in particular in relation to dairy and meat products, to investigate the possibility of limiting the scope of mandatory country of origin labelling to cases where consumer interest is balanced against the costs, such as for drinking milk as well as lightly processed dairy and meat products, and to make legislative proposals in these areas; urges the Commission to consider recent concerns over labelling and the consistent application of legislation related to the EU food chain, while applying the latest scientific and technological developments in this field; notes that origin labelling is already required and working effectively for many other food products including unprocessed meat, eggs, fruit and vegetables, fish, honey, extra virgin olive oil, virgin olive oil, wine and spirit drinks;
105. Notes that key provisions under the Biocidal Products Regulation on the approval of suppliers and the registration of active substances used for treated articles face significant compliance issues because of low awareness among affected businesses; strongly urges the Commission to include the Regulation under its 2017 REFIT agenda, with specific regard to the financial and administrative burdens faced by SMEs and micro-enterprises when compiling approval dossiers for the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) under this legislation;
106. Notes the financial and regulatory challenges for Member States in complying with the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC), often considered to be a poor example of effective EU legislation, with numerous infringement cases still pending; emphasises the need to harmonise its reporting cycle with that of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) so that the same monitoring data can be used for the reviews of both directives, and to limit and simplify nitrate planning requirements, which have proved an unnecessary bureaucratic burden for the agricultural sector; urges the Commission to include a systematic review of the Nitrates Directive in its 2017 REFIT agenda in order to streamline cumbersome requirements and reduce compliance costs;
107. Reiterates the importance of investing in and incentivising the shift to a circular economy, which is compatible with the Commission's long-term jobs, growth and competitiveness agenda and will reduce the EU's dependence on imported raw materials, offering the potential to create a win-win situation for all stakeholders; calls

on the Commission to ensure the effective implementation of its Action Plan for the Circular Economy, with specific regard to the objectives set for 2017;

108. Emphasises again the importance of achieving the targets set out in the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, and stresses the strategic importance of that strategy, including from a socio-economic perspective; expresses its serious concern about the continuing loss of biodiversity and notes that the 2020 targets will not be achieved without additional, substantial and continuous efforts; stresses the crucial importance of increased political will at the highest level to safeguard biodiversity and halt biodiversity loss; calls on the Commission, together with the competent authorities in the Member States and all stakeholders, to prioritise the implementation of existing legislation, enforcement, and further integration of biodiversity protection into other policy areas; reiterates that the Nature Directives should be fully implemented and not revised;
109. Calls on the Commission to take urgent action to stop illegal trade in pets; recalls the importance of identification and registration systems in this connection, and reminds the Commission of Parliament's explicit call¹ to increase the compatibility of such systems in the Member States with a view to enhancing animal welfare;
110. Draws attention to the need for a comprehensive implementation assessment of Regulations (EC) No 1107/2009 and (EC) No 396/2005, and requests that the Commission conduct a detailed independent evaluation in 2017; takes the view that this review should consider the main elements of both regulations, while also looking to improve efficiency and coordination between the two pieces of legislation; calls on the Commission to ensure that the regulatory framework for plant protection products adheres to the principles and practices of Better Regulation, and provides a decision-making framework which is coherent, efficient, predictable and scientifically robust;

Common agricultural policy

111. Calls on the Commission, in the context of the mid-term review of the multiannual financial framework (MFF) and the continuing demands placed on European farmers in terms of producing more for less, meeting environmental and welfare standards and delivering public goods, to maintain the agricultural ceilings in Heading 2;
112. Calls on the Commission, in the interest of reducing the burden on producers and improving the common agricultural policy (CAP) in terms of effective delivery of public goods and environmental goals, to undertake a full mid-term review of the CAP, moving towards a more market-oriented policy with greater scope for innovation and competitiveness, equalising direct payments across the Member States and reviewing provisions in the single Common Market Organisation (sCMO) in order to strengthen Producer Organisations, encourage take-up of these measures and provide farmers with new financial tools and options for dealing with continued market volatility;
113. Stresses the importance of the CAP simplification agenda and calls on the Commission to assess comprehensively the effectiveness of the greening measures; welcomes the

¹ European Parliament resolution of 25 February 2016 on the introduction of compatible systems for the registration of pet animals across Member States, Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0065.

Commission's commitment to carrying out a mid-term Ecological Focus Area (EFA) review, but stresses the need for this review to extend to all three greening measures; calls on the Commission to further develop and implement measures to introduce proportionality, flexibility and greater levels of tolerance in relation to the management of the CAP, and to address the pervading 'culture of fear' which exists among farmers in relation to cross-compliance checks and the application of penalties;

114. Stresses the need to address imbalances in the food supply chain, particularly in order to ensure fairness and transparency in the relationship between primary producers, processors, suppliers and distributors, and calls on the Commission to engage with the sector to address concerns in relation to anonymous reporting and strengthening the position of the primary producer;
115. Calls on the Commission to support innovation in agriculture by providing regulatory coherence and taking innovation fully into account in forthcoming reviews and reforms of relevant legislation; stresses that the Commission must prioritise research and innovation in agriculture if the sector is to remain competitive and to meet current and future challenges;

Common fisheries policy

116. Calls on the Commission to encourage the economic and social contribution of small-scale fisheries to local economies as a priority in order to ensure the maintenance of coastal population and reduce the high levels of unemployment in other economic sectors;
117. Recalls that the common fisheries policy (CFP) aims to ensure that fisheries are environmentally, economically and socially sustainable and provide a source of healthy food for EU citizens; recalls that avoiding unwanted catches is an overarching objective of the CFP, and notes that a key priority in implementing the landing obligation is to reduce unwanted bycatch and increase fisheries' survivability; calls on the Commission to carry out continuous assessment and monitoring of the emergence of potential choke species as a consequence of the landing obligation, especially in mixed fisheries; calls on the Commission to continue to work closely with fishermen and scientists to identify and forecast where choke species may occur and to research solutions such as innovative fishing techniques;
118. Stresses that it is essential that science is at the core of fisheries policy; reminds the Commission that it is essential for multiannual plans in particular to be based on scientific evidence; welcomes Commissioner Vella's undertaking to propose a multiannual plan for the Mediterranean Sea in 2016; takes note of the Commission's concerns about the state of stocks in the Mediterranean Sea;
119. Stresses the need for the Commission to revise the Mediterranean Regulation of 2006 to ensure that the use of fishing gears and techniques is regionally devised and tailor-made to the specificities of the Mediterranean area and its fisheries, allowing for the particular hydrographic features of the Mediterranean Basin; calls on the Commission to ensure that a review of the assessment of the status of fish stocks relevant to coastal fisheries is carried out, and stresses the need for an analysis of small-scale fisheries and their impact on stocks, given that the species fished in coastal fisheries are extremely

valuable in socio-economic terms, even though they account for only a small proportion of total catches;

120. Stresses that the development of aquaculture and mariculture can play an important role not only in the recovery of species diversity but also in the growth of the marine economy; calls on the Commission to support Member States in promoting policies to encourage fishing and tourism (fishing tourism, mariculture, etc.) in compliance with the principle of sustainability;
121. Welcomes the new fisheries framework for technical measures as a means to simplify fisheries policy; stresses that a one-size-fits-all approach to EU fisheries policy is not effective, and asks the Commission to take steps to ensure that the new approach of regionalisation results in increased freedom to the fishing industry and reduces burdensome red tape for fishermen;

Regional development policy

122. Believes that, during this Commission Work Programme period, the ESI Funds should assist Member States in making the tough, but essential, economic reforms necessary to achieve greater competitiveness, and emphasises that the ESI Funds should be invested where they achieve the greatest added value; calls on the Commission, in this vein, to use the conclusions of its 'lagging regions' project to identify factors linked to slow progress in raising low levels of economic development and to prepare relevant action plans detailing measures to ensure an effective investment policy;
123. Notes that the ESI Funds remain complex to administer and difficult for SMEs and civil society groups to access; urges the Commission to further its efforts to simplify ESI Fund procedures and processes for all stakeholders in order to improve the impact, absorption and take-up of the Funds, while ensuring effective financial controls and the elimination of irregularities, including fraud; highlights, in particular, the need to tackle gold-plating practices, to simplify access to financial instruments and to bring aid schemes closer to business; calls on the Commission to fully include the ESI Funds in the EU's Better Regulation strategy, with the particular aim of reducing bureaucratic burdens on SMEs, and to redouble its own efforts to operate as a single unit when dealing with the ESI Funds, with more effective coordination between the relevant directorates-general;
124. Stresses the value of place-based and bottom-up approaches to regional development, which support local development strategies, create job opportunities and encourage sustainable rural development, and wider use of Territorial Impact Assessments; believes that new territorial development instruments (integrated territorial investment, community-led local development and joint action plans) have the potential to respond more effectively to local needs in both urban and rural areas; urges the Commission, therefore, to implement regulation covering their financing from the ESI Funds as a whole, in order to strengthen synergies, and to review their limited take-up;
125. Calls on the Commission to provide for increased flexibility of spending within ESI Fund programmes in order to ensure investment in regions' priority areas, while respecting the need to reduce regional disparities and achieve the overarching goal of territorial cohesion with a view to improving competitiveness;

126. Calls, while recognising that some re-prioritisation of funds for the 2014-2020 programming period may be appropriate in order to enable local and regional authorities to respond effectively to needs on the ground, on the Commission to avoid any top-down transfer of pre-programmed funds for the purpose of mitigating the effects of migration; stresses that the ESI Funds exist to support stable, long-term regional development with a view to increasing competitiveness and not to finance emergency measures;
127. Calls on the Commission to engage with Parliament and the Member States as early as possible regarding the future of the ESI Funds post-2020, with a clear focus on targeted investment that adds value for taxpayers; sees value in new thinking around result-orientation and integrated funding instruments that combine the multiple EU grant and loan programmes in the area of territorial development, and in an increase in administrative support for countries in net receipt of ESI funding in parallel with greater flexibility for, and less intervention in, investment by net contributors;

Transport issues

128. Stresses the need to take forward the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and core network corridors as a priority in order to link the transport networks of all EU regions and solve such problems as the lack of appropriate infrastructure, accessibility and low interoperability between the eastern and western parts of the EU; underlines the need for synergy among the financial resources of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) and the ESI Funds in order to ensure the best use of all available EU funding; believes that, notwithstanding the 2011 Transport White Paper, the EU still takes a compartmentalised approach and considers each mode of transport too much in isolation; invites the Commission to develop a strategy for the development of crossmodal and multimodal transport;
129. Urges the Commission to proceed with the clarification and simplification of existing legislation on driving time and rest periods, in particular Regulation (EC) No 561/2006 on the harmonisation of certain social legislation relating to road transport and Regulation (EU) No 165/2014 on tachographs in road transport, in order to improve legal clarity for Member States and road transport operators, and to facilitate the freedom to provide transport services across the EU, while ensuring consistent and uniform implementation of the rules;
130. Notes the agreement reached on a regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 1365/2006 on statistics of goods transport by inland waterways as regards the conferring of delegated and implementing powers on the Commission for the adoption of certain measures; stresses that the tendency to broaden the scope of the various statistical data to be collected (for example, as in this case, a new system for collecting statistical data on passenger transport), will bring more red tape and have no added value;
131. Urges the Commission to work towards more efficient measures than those set out in Regulation (EC) No 868/2004 for tackling unfair competition for state-sponsored carriers from non-EU airlines in the European aviation market, in order to safeguard fair competition and a level playing field for all market players;
132. Asks the Commission to encourage Member States to step up their cooperation with

Euro Contrôle Route in order to ensure more effective implementation of existing EU legislation on documentation and licence fraud in the road sector;

133. Notes public concern about rail freight noise as one of the side-effects of railway transport with environmental and health impacts; stresses, however, that noise is a ‘local issue by definition’ and should be tackled at the level of the Member States, and that the objective of noise reduction must be balanced with maintaining the competitiveness of railways and avoiding market distortion and a disadvantageous situation for railway companies, which would need huge additional resources to retrofit wagons;

Social policy

134. Notes that the five key areas for action identified in the Commission’s Strategy for equal opportunities between women and men 2010-2015 remain valid priorities for the mandate of the Juncker Commission (2014-2019), and that the Commission has published a 40-page staff working document outlining its ‘Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019’; asks the Commission, when dealing with policies in the field of equal opportunities between men and women, to focus on the implementation of existing legislation by the Member States, and emphasises the importance of exchanges of best practice, in particular where Member States have exclusive competence, before considering the necessity of submitting new legislative proposals and policy tools in the field of equal opportunities;
135. Calls on the Commission to monitor effectively the implementation of Directive 2014/67/EU by all Member States; firmly believes that all concerns raised by the parliaments of 11 Member States via the yellow card procedure must be properly assessed by the Commission; strongly urges the Commission to await the full implementation of Directive 2014/67/EU by the Member States before progressing with its proposal for a revision of Directive 96/71/EC;
136. Reminds the Commission that, in line with Article 153 TFEU, the setting of wages is a Member State competence;
137. Supports the Commission’s efforts to amend and review Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems in order to take into account changing realities and structural diversity within and between Member States; stresses, however, that the provision and management of social security systems are a Member State competence which the Union coordinates but does not harmonise;
138. Welcomes the Commission’s withdrawal of the Maternity Leave Directive (92/85/EEC); believes that the failure to reach agreement on the proposal indicates the difficulties in brokering agreements at EU level in the area of employment and social affairs;
139. Stresses that, in the context of the Commission’s roadmap ‘New start to address the challenges of work-life balance faced by working families’, any new proposal must be in full compliance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality;
140. Reminds the Commission of the Five Presidents’ Report, which recognised in the context of social convergence that there is no one-size-fits-all template; firmly believes,

in this connection, that the proposal for an EU Pillar of Social Rights must, first and foremost, focus on increasing the use of benchmarks and the exchange of best practice;

141. Notes the Commission's intention to review the social *acquis*; calls on the Commission to review the relevance of the *acquis* in light of new trends and to identify opportunities for simplification and burden reduction, including through the withdrawal or repeal of legislation where appropriate;
142. Recognises the broad aims of the Youth Guarantee in terms of its potential value to focus Member States' attention on the need for action to combat youth unemployment; stresses, however, in the context of Court of Auditors Special Report No 3/2015, the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of the programme's results in order to create more targeted policies and instruments; stresses that any future substantial increases in funding should be approved only once the conclusions and recommendations of the Court of Auditors report on the Youth Guarantee have been addressed;
143. Urges the Commission to ensure that proposed EU legislation and funding programmes comply with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; welcomes the commitment made to ensure the accessibility of goods and services, including buildings, together with effective enforcement and complaint mechanisms; calls on the Commission, when preparing future legislative acts in relevant areas, e.g. in relation to the digital agenda, to take account of the fact that accessibility is equally important in the physical environment as in the ICT field;

Culture and education policy

144. Highlights the opportunity afforded by the mid-term review of the MFF to assess the effectiveness and added value of EU culture and education programmes in the current funding period and to ensure their effective management; calls, in particular, on the Commission to assess the added value of the Europe for Citizens and Creative Europe programmes, in line with the subsidiarity principle and the Better Regulation agenda;
145. Welcomes the application of the Commission's REFIT programme to the review of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive; calls on the Commission to actively apply the conclusions of the REFIT process and the results of stakeholder consultation to any revision of the directive; underlines the need to ensure continued investment in the creative cycle and access to high-quality content for consumers, while enhancing protection for minors from harmful content and supporting the production and distribution of European audiovisual media works;
146. Recalls that the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) should complement national actions and support Member States in their efforts to develop education and training systems; calls on the Commission, in this connection, to ensure that Member State and, where applicable, regional competency in this area, and in all other areas of culture and education policy, is fully respected and that the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality are observed; calls on the Commission to ensure that the expert community and relevant stakeholders, particularly parents' organisations, are sufficiently involved in work on ET 2020;
147. Supports the Commission's efforts to promote the visibility and transparency of higher

education qualifications through the Bologna Process; advocates that more attention be paid to addressing the side-effects of both the Bologna Process and mobility programmes and ensuring greater flexibility for educational establishments in the organisation of their learning programmes; calls for further consideration to be given to cooperation and the exchange of best practice in the area of further education, and to the development of links to business and higher education institutions so as to ensure that post-16 vocational education and training across the EU develops the skill sets required for growth and jobs;

148. Expresses concern that the European Schools have failed to address concerns raised by the Court of Auditors; calls, while welcoming the adoption in 2014 of the new Financial Regulation for the European Schools as a means of responding to some of the issues raised, on the Commission to undertake in 2017 a timely and comprehensive review of the governance, management and organisation of the European Schools system, given that 60 % of the European Schools budget comes from the budget of the EU;

Institutional issues

149. Calls on the Commission to recognise that democratically elected regional and local governments and their representative associations are fully part of the European law-making process, while ‘stakeholders’ or ‘lobbyists’ are not; specifically requests that they be exempted from the Transparency Register obligations, as is already the case for individual regions;
150. Calls on the Commission to initiate an ordinary Treaty revision procedure under Article 48 of the Treaty on European Union with a view to proposing the necessary changes to Article 341 TFEU and Protocol 6 thereto to allow Parliament to decide on the location of its seat and its internal organisation;
151. Calls on the Commission to bring forward a text amending the Statute of the Court of Justice to the effect that ‘Any judge who has taken part in the consideration of the case may annex to the judgment either a separate opinion, concurring with or dissenting from that judgment, or a bare statement of dissent’;
152. Calls on the Commission to follow the principles of conferral, subsidiarity and proportionality and to respect the existing and future opt-outs, derogations and legal guarantees granted to some Member States by the Treaties and the protocols and declarations annexed thereto;
153. Calls on the Commission to respect the perimeter of national sovereignty, including the areas of border controls, selective immigration, social rules and policy, nationality law, criminal law, family law, electoral law, and culture and education policies, as well as, more generally, the absolute primacy of their constitutions;
154. Calls on the Commission to demonstrate clearly that all initiatives it takes against Member States, such as the procedure for investigating the rule of law, have a solid legal basis and are based on well-argued facts and a reliable diagnosis of the situation;
155. Calls on the Commission to pay more rigorous attention to respect for transparency and the separation of powers, through stricter compliance with the provisions of Article 290

TFEU, and, therefore, not to use delegated acts to pass genuinely legislative measures which should be adopted under the ordinary legislative procedure;

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