

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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2009

Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

2008/2334(INI)

10.2.2009

OPINION

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

on a European Economic Recovery Plan
(2008/2334(INI))

Rapporteur: Elisabeth Morin

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs calls on the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Considers that the economic crisis is posing unprecedented challenges to the real economy in the EU; is worried that the crisis is already having a perceptible negative impact on European labour markets and entails risks for social cohesion;
2. Welcomes the establishment of an European economic recovery plan and stresses the importance of a coordinated response from the European Union that reflects the European social model; notes the commitment of the Member States to coordinating their efforts with a view to restoring the dynamism of the European economies;
3. Nevertheless notes the inadequacy of the European recovery plan and invites the Member States, and in particular those belonging to the euro area, to examine the possibility of a major European loan, guaranteed jointly by the Member States;
4. Calls for a set of measures in the context of the Lisbon Strategy, in particular in the social and employment field, which should be coordinated, and should be backed up by linkage to the monetary and budgetary spheres, taking account of the EU's commitment to the reduction of poverty and the development of quality jobs; stresses that employment and social policies must play an active role in the response to the crisis;
5. Is extremely concerned about the number of jobs lost in the European Union as a result of the negative prospects for the coming months and notes that these will be at all skill levels and that there is likely to be a significant gender impact in certain sectors, and stresses the need to continue working towards lower unemployment, to support social inclusion through employment and to protect European workers from the negative social consequences of the crisis; in order to achieve these aims, considers it essential to set clear targets in terms of sustainable job creation and maintenance;
6. Stresses the need for an unprecedented coordinated effort to make major investments in the fields of energy, the environment and infrastructure to support sustainable development, help the creation of high quality jobs and ensure social cohesion; considers, therefore, that people are more likely to accept the efforts required of them if these are perceived on the one hand to be fair and on the other to guarantee employment and social integration;
7. Calls on the Commission and Member States to use all means at their disposal to support European undertakings, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to promote job creation and boost the confidence of European investors, employers, workers and consumers;
8. Calls for the effective launch of a comprehensive European employment initiative by ensuring that an undertaking can be set up free of charge anywhere in the European Union within three days and that the formalities for the hiring of first employees can be

fulfilled via a single access point on the one hand, and by reinforcing activation schemes, particularly for the low-skilled, through personalised advice, intensive training or retraining and upskilling of workers, apprenticeships, subsidised employment and start-up grants for the self-employed and businesses on the other;

9. Strongly recommends that the European employment initiative include an early intervention at the time that jobs are in fact lost, not least in order to reduce the risk of people becoming excluded from the labour market; considers that such interventions will require significant investment in training, including an increase in training providers while concentrating on the better coordination of training and labour reintegration programmes, and should not only use short-term measures but should also endeavour to make high-level qualifications possible in order to increase the overall skill levels within the EU and to respond to the changing needs of the current economy;
10. Stresses that it is essential to include groups which are already vulnerable in the labour market and to maintain efforts to include them, especially in times of crisis;
11. Welcomes the fact that in some Member States there has also been interest by consumers in transferring their custom to financial institutions based on mutual and ethical criteria;
12. Welcomes the proposals of the Commission and calls on the Member States to adapt new provisions of the regulations of the European Social Fund, the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund and the European Regional Development Fund, including the simplification of the procedures and the widening of eligible costs to serve employment and social inclusion goals even more efficiently, continuing to support employment in key sectors of the economy and ensuring that when providing such assistance strengthening of social and territorial cohesion remain a priority in order to avoid asymmetrical development within the Union; hopes for the speedier release of funding targeted at employment support, and for European support programmes to be geared to helping the most vulnerable groups in society including programmes to guarantee decent living conditions and access to high-quality services of general interest;
13. Expresses its support for gearing efforts towards employment, in key sectors of the European economy, particularly through the European globalisation adjustment fund, including by improving and speeding up its procedures to enable the swiftest possible intervention in strategic sectors affected by job losses;
14. Calls on the Member States to ensure that measures taken in the short term to alleviate the effects of the crisis are accompanied by additional efforts towards the implementation of structural reforms in the context of the Lisbon Strategy, in particular those aimed at supporting SMEs, promoting jobs, innovation, research, education and training;
15. Calls on the Member States to invest in the social economy, which can contribute to growth since it has considerable potential for creating high-quality jobs and strengthening social and territorial cohesion;
16. Stresses the importance of implementing common principles of flexicurity while guaranteeing adequate social protection for all, in particular social security systems that provide appropriate protection with respect to national traditions;

17. Calls on the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, to continue to monitor regularly the development of the situation on the European labour market and the impact of the crisis on that market, and to take appropriate measures to set the economies of the European Union on the road towards sustainable development.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	10.2.2009
Result of final vote	+: 35 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Jan Andersson, Philip Bushill-Matthews, Alejandro Cercas, Jean Louis Cottigny, Jan Cremers, Harald Ettl, Richard Falbr, Carlo Fatuzzo, Stephen Hughes, Karin Jöns, Jean Lambert, Bernard Lehideux, Elizabeth Lynne, Thomas Mann, Maria Matsouka, Elisabeth Morin, Juan Andrés Naranjo Escobar, Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, Pier Antonio Panzeri, Rovana Plumb, José Albino Silva Peneda, Jean Spautz, Gabriele Stauner, Ewa Tomaszewska, Anne Van Lancker
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Jean Marie Beaupuy, Udo Bullmann, Françoise Castex, Rumiana Jeleva, Magda Kósáné Kovács, Lasse Lehtinen, Adrian Manole, Ria Oomen-Ruijten, Csaba Sógor, Patrizia Toia