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*Committee on Employment and Social Affairs*

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**2011/2157(INI)**

9.11.2011

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Foreign Affairs

on the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy  
(2011/2157(INI))

Rapporteur: Sylvana Rapti

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## SUGGESTIONS

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

- A. whereas a holistic approach favouring employment and social protection is required for sustainable economic growth;
  - B. whereas the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is essential for the stability of the neighbouring countries of the EU and contributes to the security and progress of all and whereas there is a shared interest in a democratic, stable, prosperous and peaceful wider area around Europe;
  - C. whereas the EU serves globally as a model of social development and can offer valuable expertise on responsible growth;
  - D. whereas the new ENP is and must continue to be reassessed in accordance with progress made in the neighbouring countries but also with regard to issues of mutual interest, and should be remodelled and conditioned accordingly to address developments in historical challenges and give priority to urgent situations;
  - E. whereas the efforts to initiate democratic changes in North Africa were brought about by people, mainly the younger generation, living in societies with unequal wealth distribution, high unemployment, insufficient social security, a lack of education and social prospects or even living below the poverty line and surviving thanks to the informal economy;
  - F. whereas the region around the southern partner countries has one of the lowest activity rates in the world and the events of early 2011 in a number of partner countries offer new opportunities to address the challenges of job creation;
  - G. whereas the European Neighbourhood Policy has to address equally the problems of the eastern and southern dimensions with respect to democracy and economic and social matters;
  - H. whereas demographic trends in different regions of the European Neighbourhood Policy differ significantly;
  - I. whereas the immediate geo-proximity with the eastern and southern borders is of strategic importance, influxes of migrant workers, linked to cultural similarities and historical past, and potential future developments regarding enlargement are to be assessed as a priority;
1. Stresses that the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) should support sustainable structural economic, social and educational reforms, undertaken within a secure and fair legal framework and in line with International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions, targeting job creation and social protection, and the appropriate modernisation of labour policies including training and educational programmes, with labour standards as pre-

requisites for financial support. These reforms should encourage social and economic growth preventing social exclusion and social dumping while improving the business environment and support for small and medium-sized enterprises;

2. Urges the ENP partners to ratify all ILO core labour conventions and align national legislation with them;
3. Stresses that the ENP should support ENP countries in their own efforts to tackle urgent labour-market issues and provide long-term responses to labour market challenges, such as supply-demand mismatches, informal employment, bad working conditions, alarmingly high youth unemployment, illegal child labour, gender-based inequality and exclusion of vulnerable social groups, drawing on the expertise and collaboration of the EU, especially the European Training Foundation, and the international organisations that deal with reforming labour markets and developing social policies; calls for the establishment of an exchange mechanism for best practices regarding labour reforms and employment policies as well as for the provision of necessary technical support to the ENP countries;
4. Stresses the importance of creating quality jobs, adapted to economic and labour market needs, in order to provide options to stay in the home country; reiterates that the development and close involvement of the private sector, notably small and medium-sized enterprises, are key levers for job creation; recalls at the same time the crucial need to cope effectively with irregular migration of vulnerable migrants who might be forced into or exposed to the risk of engaging in illegal behaviour or illegal situations on EU territory; recalls in this respect the importance of improving the living conditions of all migrants;
5. Stresses that the ENP should form the basis for effective cooperation in tackling illegal immigration, since the partner countries are both countries of origin and countries of transit for illegal immigrants, managing effectively the borders, fighting organised crime and, consequently, protecting human rights;
6. Recalls the necessity of ensuring that the minimum wage according to national practices provides an adequate standard of living for workers and their families and that deductions from wages should not deprive employees and their dependants of their very means of subsistence;
7. Notes that adequate time should be foreseen for notices of termination of employment, taking into account the employee's length of service;
8. Stresses the usefulness of controlled circular mobility for both non-EU countries and the EU, and asks for measures to avoid a potential brain drain; stresses the need for the dialogue on support for access to the EU labour market to continue, and the need for better dissemination of information on the existing legal possibilities as regards mobility and migration, and on the opportunities for using the competences available necessary for the labour market; recalls that the right of a national from a non-EU country to reside and search for work on the territory of a Member State is regulated via directives at European level; states that adverse effects, such as family alienation, should be correctly assessed; stresses the positive impact of economic migration in achieving sustainable labour markets;

9. Considers that cross-border projects and financial support for educational programmes such as Erasmus should be the main focus in assisting these countries in their transition towards a social market economy and in controlling the negative effects on their labour markets;
10. Welcomes student and vocational-training exchange initiatives such as the recently adopted Written Declaration on the establishment of Euro-Mediterranean Erasmus and Leonardo da Vinci programmes;
11. Insists on the empowerment of people, communities and the civil society, and on strengthening social dialogue;
12. Urges the Commission to promote social partners that are fully independent in terms of their creation and their development through various instruments, including financial and technical support, training, creation of networks and capacity-building measures, since social partners are indispensable for the establishment of social policies;
13. Believes that those Member States that share borders with the ENP countries are of crucial importance in assisting and sharing knowledge with those countries, especially with regard to labour and employment reforms; calls therefore on the Commission to actively engage in dialogue and actions together with the national authorities and the social partners in the neighbouring countries, in order to assist the ENP countries in creating networks and to provide technical assistance for capacity and institutional building;
14. Recalls the importance of the right of everyone to form trade unions and the right of trade unions to establish national federations or confederations and urges that this be facilitated and respected in practice; recalls that the right to strike is a recognised fundamental right and may not be refused solely on the ground of working in an area that is essential for a community, without differentiation between specific functions; urges that the right to be informed and consulted be promoted as being applicable to all areas of mutual concern, guaranteed by sanctions, and not excluded solely on the ground of working in the civil service;
15. Urges the Commission to support administrative capacity building in employment and social affairs, paying special attention to building capacity in legal services, which will ensure better preparation for leading the reforms;
16. Stresses the importance of coordinated policies between the EU and the Member States for better results in the areas of mutual concern but equally in setting conditionality standards;
17. Calls on the Commission to embrace the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) as the guiding policy framework for medium-term pro-poor economic growth and the equitable distribution of wealth according to the needs of the country;
18. Requires the Commission to effectively monitor and evaluate on an annual basis the results of its actions and financing, with respect to employment policies in particular, in conjunction with the provisions of ILO conventions and build the monitoring results into its future actions;

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	7.11.2011
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 31 -: 3 0: 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Edit Bauer, Jean-Luc Bennahmias, Pervenche Berès, Philippe Boulland, Milan Cabrnoch, Alejandro Cercas, Ole Christensen, Frédéric Daerden, Karima Delli, Frank Engel, Richard Falbr, Marian Harkin, Roger Helmer, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Ádám Kósa, Veronica Lope Fontagné, Elizabeth Lynne, Thomas Mann, Elisabeth Morin-Chartier, Siiri Oviir, Konstantinos Poupakis, Sylvana Rapti, Elisabeth Schroedter, Jutta Steinruck, Traian Ungureanu, Andrea Zanoni
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Georges Bach, Raffaele Baldassarre, Edite Estrela, Julie Girling, Richard Howitt, Ria Oomen-Ruijten, Emilie Turunen
<b>Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote</b>	Catherine Bearder