OPINION

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

on CARS 2020: towards a strong, competitive and sustainable European car industry
(2013/2062(INI))

Rapporteur: Birgit Sippel
SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs calls on the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

A. whereas dynamic, inclusive labour markets, in which people possess high, market-relevant skill levels, are essential to the competitiveness of the European economy and social cohesion;

1. Welcomes the Action Plan for the automotive industry and notes the strategic importance of the automotive industry to the European economy, which represents around 12 million direct and indirect jobs, delivers a sizeable positive contribution to the EU trade balance of some EUR 90 billion (in 2011), attracts the highest private spending on research and innovation (circa EUR 30 billion in 2010), and acts as an essential driver for technological innovation; stresses that an ambitious European industrial policy, with a strong emphasis on local employment and the development of green technologies, is a necessary lever for a job-intensive recovery and for boosting sustainable growth; stresses that the European car industry needs a renewal strategy directed towards more sustainable cars, as part of a greener transport system;

2. Points to the importance of standing out from the global marketplace in terms of quality and safety; considers it necessary, therefore, to invest in advanced technologies and to emphasise innovation;

3. Welcomes the Commission’s ‘eCall’ proposal, which relates to a system enabling vehicles to call emergency services automatically in the event of a serious accident;

4. Maintains, with a view to fostering greater integration within the EU, that adaptations enabling vehicles to be used by drivers with a disability should be improved in terms of their performance and accessibility;

5. Calls for the health and safety standards set out in the ‘Community Strategy on Health and Safety at Work 2007-2012’ to be improved so as to keep pace with changes in work and tasks of various types; to that end, calls on the Commission to submit a European health and safety strategy for 2020 as soon as possible;

6. Calls for enhanced efforts to be made to implement the EU 2020 objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth by promoting a stronger European automotive industry; stresses in this context the importance of maintaining a strong automotive manufacturing base in Europe, including by exporting a larger portfolio of high-quality and sustainable-technology vehicles to third countries; points out that research, development and innovation are becoming increasingly important, especially as regards the need to develop low-emission, energy-efficient cars, in order to enable Europe to remain competitive and hence to boost employment by reducing Europe’s dependence on imported energy;

7. Recognises that electric vehicles have growth potential, not just as far as energy sustainability and climate action are concerned, but also because they can generate
economic growth and employment; calls, therefore, for efforts to be brought to bear with a view to developing and improving vehicles of this type and encouraging their use in the EU; considers that, to this end, it will be necessary to set up refuelling or recharging facilities for vehicles that run on alternative fuels;

8. Welcomes the Commission’s proposed Horizon 2020 and COSME programmes, which will provide financial support that will enable businesses and SMEs to enhance their competitiveness as Europe moves towards an environment-friendly, resource-efficient transport system;

9. Welcomes the actions proposed in the fourth pillar of the Action Plan; underlines the need for long-term strategies permitting enterprises and employees to adapt to structural transformations, while anticipating change and minimising social impact; reiterates its call for a legal act on information and consultation of workers, and anticipation and management of restructuring; attaches particular importance to long-term planning for structural change designed to ensure a gradual transition if labour requirements change; stresses that skill levels should be such as to secure employment and allow a transition to new forms of production and business models where necessary;

10. In the context of better regulation, calls on the Commission to be more systematic in assessing the impact of its proposals on the ability of Europe’s automotive industries to remain competitive at an international level, and thus to provide many of the new jobs on which Europe relies; in this context, urges the Commission actively to discourage ‘gold-plating’ of EU law at national level;

11. Calls on the Member States to anticipate restructuring processes in order to save jobs, foster internal and external mobility and minimise possible adverse effects of those processes; calls on the Member States to enforce national law and existing EU directives effectively, including the Collective Redundancies Directive, the Transfer of Undertakings Directive and the Information and Consultation Framework Directive, without infringing the subsidiarity principle; considers that EU funds should play a major role in averting, minimising or mitigating such adverse effects as might result from restructuring processes;

12. Takes the view that when restructuring is unavoidable, plant closures or downsizing should be considered only as a last resort; believes, accordingly, that in such cases information should be supplied to, and negotiations conducted with, stakeholders, including trade unions, workers’ representatives and company representatives, with a view to reaching an agreement serving to ensure the company’s viability while respecting the workers’ rights;

13. Calls on the Member States to make full use of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) as a short-term measure in the event of plant closures and significant downsizing; reiterates its view that the design of EGF measures should be compatible with the shift towards a resource-efficient and environmentally sustainable economy;

14. Stresses the need to anticipate skills needs and to adapt the skill levels of workers, including through lifelong learning; supports the creation of a European Automotive Skills Council to promote relevant higher education and vocational training by bringing together industrial, employment and skill observatories, as well as relevant social partners and
education and training providers’ organisations, in order to promote exchange of best practice, skills development and employment in the automotive sector;

15. Stresses the importance of social dialogue for skills adaptation and restructuring processes and the need to follow best practice; recalls positive examples of the development of temporary, innovative instruments during the crisis, such as short-time work, which have helped to maintain previous employment levels;

16. Encourages the Member States to adopt National Job Plans in the context of the European Semester, taking into account the specific skills needs of the industrial sector in general and the automotive sector in particular;

17. Considers a skilled workforce to be vital if the European automotive sector is to be competitive and built on quality; believes, therefore, that education and training systems must be modernised with a view to upgrading the skills needed for the future through new curricula, ICT and partnerships with employers;

18. Calls for the European Social Fund to be used for the retraining and reskilling of workers and for improvements in lifelong learning, addressing skills needs, skills matching and anticipation of change, particularly in the automotive industry, taking into account the overcapacity in the European car industry and the need to shift towards a sustainable economy and green vehicles;

19. Stresses the need for even better use to be made of EURES as a tool complementary to Member States’ employment agencies and, in this context, supports the use of EURES not only as a means of advising workers, job-seekers and employers on the right to free movement, but also as a labour-market instrument with a special focus on placement in permanent full-time employment which enables workers to live their lives to the full, thereby enhancing the ability of European car manufacturers to access the skilled labour supply they need;

20. Points out the social and economic benefits of creating one-stop shops in order to facilitate the free movement of workers between Member States, for the benefit of workers and the automotive industry;

21. Takes the view that the development of environment-friendly new automotive technologies – to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, for example – could both guarantee the long-term economic success of the car industry and enable jobs to be secured on a lasting basis.

22. Stresses that social impact assessments and considerations should be mainstreamed in all industrial policies; emphasises that social insecurity has negative consequences for innovation and the productivity and creativity of the workforce and thus also for economic growth;

23. Notes that technological innovation and green growth are key competitiveness factors;

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stresses that public funding should foster innovation in the European industry, including in the car industry, for example through the EIB; underlines the fact that these measures should be made conditional upon their capacity to create ecological added value and sustainable, quality employment in the EU.
# RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

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<th><strong>Date adopted</strong></th>
<th>26.9.2013</th>
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| **Result of final vote** | +: 34  
|                     | -: 3  
|                     | 0: 0  |
| **Members present for the final vote** | Edit Bauer, Heinz K. Becker, Pervenche Berès, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Philippe Boulland, David Casa, Alejandro Cercas, Ole Christensen, Derek Roland Clark, Minodora Cliveti, Emer Costello, Frédéric Daerden, Sari Essayah, Richard Falbr, Marian Harkin, Danuta Jazłowiecka, Ádám Kósa, Jean Lambert, Verónica Lope Fontagné, Olle Ludvigsson, Thomas Mann, Csaba Óry, Sylvana Rapti, Licia Ronzulli, Elisabeth Schroedter, Joanna Katarzyna Skrzypulewska, Jutta Steinruck, Ruža Tomašić, Traian Ungureanu |
| **Substitute(s) present for the final vote** | Françoise Castex, Philippe De Backer, Anthea McIntyre, Ria Oomen-Ruijten, Evelyn Regner, Birgit Sippel, Csaba Sógor, Tatjana Ždanoka |