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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

2010/2010(INI)

8.6.2010

OPINION

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on developing the job potential of a new sustainable economy
(2010/2010(INI))

Rapporteur: Rovana Plumb

PA_NonLeg

SUGGESTIONS

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

1. Considers the post-crisis economy to be a strong opportunity for sustainable growth based on social justice and eco-efficiency; notes that the transformation of European economies from polluting to eco-efficient economies will lead to profound changes in production, distribution and consumption, which should be used as a chance to move towards true sustainability without endangering prosperity or jobs; believes that the transition to an economy based on non-polluting energy sources needs to be seen as an opportunity for investment in sustainable development and not merely as a burden on public and private budgets;
2. Calls on the Commission to develop statistical tools for evaluating the net balance of jobs created by the 'green economy';
3. Views sustainable development as being based on a long-term vision in which economic growth, social cohesion and environmental protection go hand in hand and are mutually supportive; draws attention to the potential represented by the creation of 'green jobs' in a sustainable economy, and supports the ILO's definition of 'green jobs' as being all jobs that foster sustainable development; stresses, nonetheless, that all jobs in 'green sectors' must be accompanied by proper working conditions;
4. Notes that the number of 'green jobs' in Europe was estimated in 2009 at 3.4 million;
5. Underlines the need to tackle climate change urgently in order to limit warming to 2°C compared with preindustrial levels; takes the view that the 20% reduction target for 2020 currently being implemented is not in line with the overall objective, and looks forward to the proposal to move to a reduction target of at least 30% as soon as possible; consequently urges the Commission to develop specific policies to ensure the transition towards a green economy, especially as regards worker re-skilling for green jobs and assistance for greening European industry in the context of global markets, as well as encouraging the private sector to invest in low-emissions technologies that are favourable to innovation and job creation;
6. Underlines that a stable, long-term, ambitious regulatory framework is a prerequisite for achieving the full potential of green employment; takes the view that, in order to achieve the EU 2020 strategy's employment targets for green jobs, concrete and legally binding measures designed to achieve an absolute reduction in natural resource use, along with other environmental targets, are necessary;
7. Takes the view that existing and proposed EU environmental legislation has significant potential to create new jobs in areas such as air, soil, water, energy, public services, agriculture, transport, forestry, and environmental management; calls on the Member States to implement EU legislation which could lead to new investment in eco-friendly technologies and jobs;

8. Points out that requiring environmentally friendly farming practices would significantly increase employment and income in the agricultural sector;
9. Stresses the need to emphasise biodiversity in the context of creating ‘green jobs’ Europe-wide, especially in the implementation of the Natura 2000 networks; points out that eco-tourism is a vanguard sector in terms of green job creation, exhibiting a growth rate in the region of 20% per annum; also favours emphasis on the potential of jobs arising from leisure activities linked to nature;
10. Underlines that subsidies for greening the urban transport sector would benefit employment if invested in public transport;
11. Encourages the Commission to provide its definition of a ‘green job’; further encourages the Commission to prioritise green jobs in the development of policies on renewable energies, energy efficiency, waste management and recycling, and building refurbishment;
12. Calls on the Commission to propose, by 2011, a strategy including legislative and non-legislative measures to encourage green jobs that are a source of growth and prosperity for all; calls on the Commission and the Member States to integrate policies aimed at re-skilling and retraining workers for green jobs with all other EU policies; stresses the need to mainstream this strategy in all types of employment, be they high-, medium- or low-skilled;
13. Notes that paragraph 8 of the Council conclusions of 21 October 2009 invites the Commission to undertake an urgent sector-by-sector review of subsidies which have an adverse environmental impact and are incompatible with sustainable development; calls on the Commission to act on those conclusions immediately, examining means of redeploying those subsidies within the budget in support of new activities related to the sustainable economy;
14. Calls on the Commission to incorporate a ninth key competence relating to the environment, climate change and sustainable development – which is essential in a knowledge society – into the framework for lifelong learning;
15. Calls on the Member States to adapt education and training systems to the needs of a new sustainable economy;
16. Believes that, when it comes to citizens’ welfare, the environment and social policy go hand in hand at local, regional, national and European level; points out that those organisations that invest in eco-efficient practices will help create a better working environment for staff and employees, and may consequently be more productive; calls on the Member States to promote the European Eco-Management & Audit Scheme (EMAS) and to encourage all economic sectors to strive to achieve EMAS registration;
17. Recalls that public procurement constitutes a large share of the market and could provide significant incentives for greening the economy; calls, therefore, for all public procurement to require high environmental standards;
18. Is convinced that the introduction of resource-efficient, green technology will not suffice

to achieve sustainable development as long as productivity increases are exchanged for increased income; takes the view, furthermore, that channelling productivity gains towards more leisure time and shorter working days, instead of higher wages and ever-rising consumption, would make sense from an environmental perspective;

19. Urges the Member States to exchange experience and best practice in the field of employment opportunities when dealing with the economic, social and environmental impact of climate change;
20. Takes the view that significantly more research is needed to measure the impact of environmental and climate change policies on net employment creation; calls on the Commission to make this area a priority under the 8th Framework Programme;
21. Believes that more should be done to internalise external costs; calls on the Commission to use existing policy tools – or develop new tools if necessary – to attribute costs, and to ensure that future policy proposals reflect its findings;
22. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to launch information and public awareness campaigns on developing green jobs in a sustainable economy;
23. Recognises that NGOs and trade unions have an important role to play in developing green job potential, in terms of contributing to the decision-making process, as employers and in raising public awareness;

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	2.6.2010
Result of final vote	+: 53 -: 1 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	János Áder, Elena Oana Antonescu, Kriton Arsenis, Pilar Ayuso, Paolo Bartolozzi, Sandrine Bélier, Martin Callanan, Nessa Childers, Chris Davies, Bairbre de Brún, Esther de Lange, Anne Delvaux, Bas Eickhout, Edite Estrela, Jill Evans, Elisabetta Gardini, Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, Julie Girling, Françoise Grossetête, Dan Jørgensen, Karin Kadenbach, Christa Kläß, Jo Leinen, Corinne Lepage, Peter Liese, Linda McAvan, Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė, Vladko Todorov Panayotov, Gilles Pargneaux, Antonia Parvanova, Andres Perello Rodriguez, Sirpa Pietikäinen, Mario Pirillo, Pavel Poc, Vittorio Prodi, Frédérique Ries, Oreste Rossi, Daciana Octavia Sârbu, Carl Schlyter, Horst Schnellhardt, Theodoros Skylakakis, Bogusław Sonik, Catherine Soullie, Salvatore Tatarella, Anja Weisgerber, Glenis Willmott, Sabine Wils, Marina Yannakoudakis
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Christofer Fjellner, Gaston Franco, Mairead McGuinness, Rovana Plumb, Bart Staes, Kathleen Van Brempt, Anna Záborská