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Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection

2010/2095(INI)

11.1.2011

OPINION

of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection

for the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

on an industrial policy for the globalised era
(2010/2095(INI))

Rapporteur: Jürgen Creutzmann

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection calls on the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Stresses that any ambitious EU industrial policy should be founded on the social market economy and that it must be based on a strong internal market, both within EU borders and in its external dimension and that it should aim to reduce transaction costs in order to promote competitive and sustainable industry in Europe; takes the view, in this connection, that all industrial policy instruments (such as R&D policy, regional and cohesion policy, competition policy, trade policy and ‘smart regulation’) must be brought to bear in addressing the opportunities and challenges of globalisation;
2. Takes the view that EU industrial policy should also be based on practical projects which bring tangible benefits to European businesses and citizens, such as the GMES, Galileo and ITER projects;
3. Stresses the need, when formulating and implementing industrial policy in the EU, to provide for consideration of the conditions under which industrial waste products, especially toxic waste products, are disposed of and their destination, in order to ensure that industrial waste does not become an environmental, economic or social burden on communities both within the EU and in third countries;
4. Notes that completion of the internal market is essential to the competitiveness and growth of European industry; stresses that European industries need a proper framework in which to create and develop goods and services at European level, and welcomes in this context the proposals set out in the Single Market Act; calls on the Commission to identify the scope for efficiency-enhancing harmonisation and improved governance within the framework of the Single Market Act, particularly in the fields of VAT, intellectual property rights and the EU patent, global standardisation, labelling and specific sectoral standards;
5. Encourages Member States to assume a more proactive role in managing the single market, by improving cooperation between national authorities and strengthening the transposition, application and enforcement of single market rules on the ground; asks Member States to reduce transaction costs through additional measures, such as more effective e-government;
6. Stresses the need for public authorities to support the development of key technologies and emphasises that the development of standards must be accelerated, as it is crucial to preserving EU industrial competitiveness and stimulating new growth, and that this applies particularly to the development of standards stimulating innovation as a means of addressing emerging environmental and societal challenges;
7. Notes that the European standardisation system has successfully contributed to completion of the internal market and to the competitiveness of European industry; nevertheless, calls on the Commission to propose measures to improve further the quality of European

standards and to speed up standardisation procedures in order to ensure that new technologies are translated more quickly into innovative products that can be sold throughout the internal market; notes that further improvements should keep the standard-setting processes close to the markets and should enhance SMEs' participation and access;

8. Highlights the need to take account of the specific characteristics of SMEs and craft enterprises in the European standardisation system, particularly in terms of cutting the cost of access to standards, disseminating standards (through the publication of abstracts) and providing financial support; stresses the key role to be played by national standards bodies in promoting and boosting participation by SMEs and craft enterprises in the standardisation process, in keeping with the 'national delegation' principle;
9. Highlights the economic importance of SMEs and craft manufacturing businesses in the European industrial fabric; insists, therefore, on the need to place the 'think small first' principle – promoted by the Small Business Act – at the heart of the EU's new industrial policy in order to guarantee that the specific characteristics of these undertakings are taken into account in the process of defining and implementing that policy;
10. Underlines the fact that European industrial policy needs to take account of the entire supply chain, which is largely based on SMEs; calls on the Commission and the Member States to extend and improve initiatives such as the Enterprise Europe Network to make SMEs more aware of the potential benefits of cross-border cooperation, and to increase the numbers of SMEs benefiting from support in order to access new markets, source new technologies and secure EU funding or finance;
11. Asserts that effective market surveillance throughout the internal market is crucial to protecting European industry from unfair competition; encourages the Commission to submit ambitious proposals to reform the current system of market surveillance, strengthening the EU's role in the coordination of national market surveillance and customs authorities and ensuring that adequate resources are made available in all Member States;
12. Calls on the Commission to continue the Better Regulation strategy and to improve governance of the single market, namely by creating 'one stop-shop' schemes and promoting online cross-border administrative solutions taking into account the particular needs of SMEs; urges the Commission, in its impact assessments, to accord greater importance to the impact of new legislation on industrial competitiveness and to screen existing legislation in this regard;
13. Notes that pre-commercial public procurement can give a decisive initial push to new markets for innovative and green technologies, while also improving the quality and effectiveness of public services; calls on the Commission and the Member States to improve communication with public authorities about existing possibilities for pre-commercial procurement;
14. Considers that the importance of public procurement in stimulating an innovative industrial base should not be underestimated; calls in this regard on the EU Member States to exploit the full potential of pre-commercial procurement as a driver of innovation and as a tool for improving SME participation in public procurement, with the effect of

identifying and effectively stimulating lead markets for European business;

15. Takes the view that innovation underpins any industrial policy; calls on the Commission and the Member States to foster key technologies through an innovation-friendly and technology-neutral framework, whilst guaranteeing respect for intellectual and industrial property rights; takes the view, in this context, that public procurement can play an important role by placing more emphasis on stimulating innovation and promoting sustainable products, particularly through the development of pre-commercial public procurement, where the EU lags significantly behind its main competitors; encourages public authorities to support public acceptance of new technologies on the basis of scientific evidence; considers it essential to strengthen human capital, in particular by taking steps to prevent the brain drain from Europe and by promoting the creation of clusters in innovative fields so as to guarantee growth and industrial competitiveness in the EU, notably through public-private partnerships;
16. Stresses that protecting intellectual property rights is of fundamental importance in protecting European know-how and promoting innovation in the EU, which entails, in particular, stepping up the fight against counterfeiting and reducing the cost of patents in Europe; calls on the Member States and the Commission, in this context, to continue their efforts with a view to the earliest possible creation of a European Union patent and a suitable dispute-settlement system, and to strengthen resources for, as well as coordination among, customs authorities and market surveillance authorities in order to detect the entry of counterfeit products onto the single market more effectively;
17. Calls on the Member States and the Commission, should concluding an agreement at European level prove to be impossible, to continue their efforts to create a European Union patent through the introduction of intensified cooperation, with a view to the development of a competitive and innovative European industrial policy;
18. Notes that high-value-added EU industries face increasing restrictions on the availability of raw materials (such as non-ferrous metals) as a result of the fast-growing pressures on global demand driven by emerging economies; stresses that an EU raw-materials recycling policy should be developed as a priority and should be designed to support the EU's industrial policy by addressing the difficulties relating to waste recycling and promoting maximum re-use of waste materials; calls on the Commission to lead in the development of a new organisational model for sustainable manufacturing, taking account of the cyclical processes which already exist in many sectors, for example aluminium-based product manufacturing;
19. Stresses that access to financing for enterprises, particularly SMEs, remains inadequate and that the EU should innovate in order to provide more favourable framework conditions for the development of investment in the real economy; takes the view that, in a context of budgetary crisis, it is more necessary than ever to explore new funding methods, notably by reducing the fragmentation of the capital risk market, developing innovative public-private partnerships, such as joint technological initiatives, and strengthening the role of the EIB; underlines the need to improve and facilitate SMEs' access to the financing available on the financial markets;
20. Takes the view that competition policy must respond to the needs of an ambitious

industrial policy, while respecting the rules of the internal market;

21. Underlines the fact that the social partners are best qualified to manage appropriate adjustments following the economic crisis and welcomes the suggestion, included in the Single Market Act, that a consultation exercise with the social partners be launched with a view to establishing a European framework for advance planning of business restructuring, aimed at the more efficient use of funds for restructuring purposes;
22. Points out that European industry is increasingly dependent on business services and that particular attention therefore needs to be paid to all the main links in the production chain; welcomes, in this context, the willingness expressed by the Commission to attach greater importance to these interdependencies;
23. Reiterates the need to make swift progress in relation to interconnection of the European business register, as a means of ensuring that information for both producers and consumers is transparent and reliable;
24. Calls on the Commission to ensure a global level playing field for European industry in terms of regulatory requirements and access to our partners' markets, particularly in relation to public procurement, and to draw up a strategy to support the internationalisation of SMEs; believes that, in an age of globalisation, any ambitious EU economic and social strategy must contain a genuine external dimension; takes the view that Europe should defend its interests and values with greater assurance and in a spirit of reciprocity and mutual benefit;

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	10.1.2011
Result of final vote	+: 27 -: 2 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Cristian Silviu Buşoi, Lara Comi, António Fernando Correia De Campos, Jürgen Creutzmann, Christian Engström, Philippe Juvin, Sandra Kalniete, Edvard Kožušník, Kurt Lechner, Hans-Peter Mayer, Mitro Repo, Robert Rochefort, Heide Rühle, Andreas Schwab, Laurence J.A.J. Stassen, Bernadette Vergnaud
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Regina Bastos, Cornelis de Jong, Frank Engel, Ashley Fox, Jean-Paul Gauzès, Liem Hoang Ngoc, María Irigoyen Pérez, Othmar Karas, Lena Kolarska-Bobińska, Constance Le Grip, Emma McClarkin, Antonyia Parvanova, Sylvana Rapti, Marek Siwiec