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Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

2005/2248(INI)

2.6.2006

OPINION

of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on a European social model for the future
(2005/2248(INI))

Draftsman: Miloslav Ransdorf

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy 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 that, although a single "European Social Model" does not exist yet, the European Union is founded on humanist traditions and a common set of values, based on the preservation of peace, social justice, solidarity, freedom and democracy and respect for human rights;
2. Considers that social standards are essential to sustainable growth, and there is a need to harmonise the high social and environmental standards within the single market;
3. Is aware that one of the cornerstones of a European social model for the future should be the social economy or third pillar, comprising cooperatives, mutual societies, associations and foundations, which form a structural part of the model itself, given their historical role, and are a factor for development, sustainability and efficiency in the future;
4. Recognises that a cohesive European social model is an essential precondition for deeper integration, sustainable and balanced economic growth and a better quality of life for all the inhabitants of our continent; believes that such a model, incorporating the highest international standards, will provide the flexibility that is needed to enhance Europe's global role;
5. Recognises that the fundamental citizens' rights on which the future harmonised European social model will be based must include the right to work and to adequate free time, the right to welfare protection based on a system of allowances, pensions and benefits, and guaranteed universal access to free public services, such as health care and education;
6. Reiterates that there is an urgent need to resolve the problems of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion; and therefore calls for measures to be adopted within the framework of the European Social Fund;
7. Takes the view that falling birth rates in Europe are undermining growth prospects for European economies;
8. Recalls the importance of the knowledge-based society and modernisation in the Lisbon Strategy, concentrating on higher value added, and increasing the employment rate;
9. Calls on the Commission, in line with the provisions of Article 136 et seq. of the Treaty, to support the Member States in their social policy, concentrating on issues of a cross-border nature;
10. Is seriously concerned that, in the absence of clear and significant increases in R&D and ICT, and unless legislation is put into practice, it will not be possible to achieve the objectives of the Lisbon strategy;

11. Stresses that lowering the wage level in the EU could lead to a redistribution of income and consequently to weaker aggregate consumer demand, thus creating a negative environment for investments, production and competitiveness;
12. Is convinced that it is essential to promote and protect individuals' access to society, especially to decent living and working conditions and to education and training, regardless of social status;
13. Stresses that social policy does not mean casting existing rules in stone or imposing new ones from above; on the contrary, we must observe the principle that the prosperity of the present generation must not be achieved at the cost of debts to be paid by the next, and that economic, social, employment and education policy must go hand in hand with a view to the creation of new jobs;
14. Is of the view that the benefits arising from “leisure time” – namely an enhanced human capital with diverse knowledge – should be translated into motivation for higher productivity, leading to higher wages and improved living standards;
15. Calls on Member States to invest more in education, lifelong learning and childcare, to encourage R&D and a more efficient consumption of energy, less bureaucracy and better legislation, and to create a more favourable and dynamic business climate with more jobs, particularly in SMEs;
16. Calls on the Commission and the Council to promote a social policy agenda aimed at: developing a society centred on inclusion and cohesion, presupposing measures in favour of stable development and respect for workers' rights; promoting a society based on gender equality and combating all forms of discrimination; achieving a distribution of wealth that is managed so as to promote the wellbeing of each individual, thus presupposing public and universal welfare systems and guaranteed universal access to high-quality public services ; pursuing a social policy that includes all groups in society; and promoting a participatory democracy seen as an integral component of the various social and employment policies;
17. Warns that social imbalance and destabilization can endanger economic growth;
18. Requests the development of corporate social responsibility in order to ensure companies' accountability to their stakeholders, social and environmental reporting requirements, implementation of international standards and principles, and independent verification and monitoring; recommends the use of public policy measures such as public procurement to stimulate responsible behaviour;
19. Emphasises the necessity of social dialogue and partnership in Europe and considers that economic growth and more social justice should go hand in hand as a result of joint efforts by governments, parliaments, employers and employees;
20. Calls for a broad debate concerning the right of all to pensions of an acceptable but affordable level, thereby keeping older citizens out of poverty and enabling them to have decent standards of living;
21. Believes that it is the EU's role to promote environmentally and socially balanced

growth, including outside Europe; stresses the importance of the EU exerting political and economic pressure on countries that fail to respect human rights, including social and labour rights;

22. Stresses that the EU should be more active in protecting itself against social dumping by countries which have based their competitiveness-building strategy on non-compliance with fundamental human rights, including social and labour rights.

PROCEDURE

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| Title | A European social model for the future | | |
| Procedure number | 2005/2248(INI) | | |
| Committee responsible | EMPL | | |
| Opinion by Date announced in plenary | ITRE 15.12.2005 | | |
| Enhanced cooperation – date announced in plenary | no | | |
| Drafts(wo)man Date appointed | Miloslav Ransdorf 26.1.2006 | | |
| Previous drafts(wo)man | | | |
| Discussed in committee | 20.2.2006 | 18.4.2006 | 30.5.2006 |
| Date adopted | 30.5.2006 | | |
| Result of final vote | +: 28 -: 18 0: 1 | | |
| Members present for the final vote | Jan Březina, Philippe Busquin, Jerzy Buzek, Joan Calabuig Rull, Pilar del Castillo Vera, Jorgo Chatzimarkakis, Giles Chichester, Den Dover, Adam Gierak, Norbert Glante, Umberto Guidoni, András Gyürk, Fiona Hall, David Hammerstein Mintz, Rebecca Harms, Erna Hennicot-Schoepges, Ján Hudacký, Romana Jordan Cizelj, Werner Langen, Vincenzo Lavarra, Angelika Niebler, Reino Paasilinna, Umberto Pirilli, Miloslav Ransdorf, Vladimír Remek, Herbert Reul, Teresa Riera Madurell, Mechtild Rothe, Paul Rübig, Andres Tarand, Britta Thomsen, Patrizia Toia, Catherine Trautmann, Claude Turmes, Nikolaos Vakalis, Alejo Vidal-Quadras Roca | | |
| Substitute(s) present for the final vote | Ivo Belet, Edit Herczog, Toine Manders, Francisca Pleguezuelos Aguilar, Vittorio Prodi, John Purvis | | |
| Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote | Maria Badia I Cutchet, Giovanni Berlinguer, Marco Cappato, Guntars Krasts, Kathy Sinnott | | |
| Comments (available in one language only) | | | |