



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

2011/2067(INI)

1.9.2011

OPINION

of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs
(2011/2067(INI))

Rapporteur: Niki Tzavela

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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. Welcomes ‘An agenda for new skills and jobs’ as part of the 2020 strategy, bearing in mind that Europe needs specific targets and concrete measures in order to work towards common goals in terms of creating jobs and promoting sustainable and inclusive growth, which can be achieved only by coordinated responses among Member States;
2. Welcomes the Commission’s recognition of the need to promote entrepreneurship and self-employment; is of the opinion that the establishment of a proper environment and incentives for creating and sustaining businesses is crucial, but not enough for the development of the European economy; stresses, therefore, that proper training in entrepreneurial skills is needed at both the middle and the higher education levels in order to ensure that Europe does not lag behind other actors; underlines the role of the European Institute of Technology in fostering business creation and development through innovation-driven research and a strong emphasis on entrepreneurship;
3. Welcomes the Commission’s first priority of giving a new impetus to flexicurity by strengthening its four components: flexible and reliable contractual arrangements, active labour-market policies, lifelong learning and training and modern social security systems;
4. Calls on the Member States and, where warranted, the regions to set up an employment monitoring centre focusing on future needs so as to anticipate the latter and provide qualifications that will maximise the likelihood of finding employment, particularly for young people;
5. Reiterates that the five Union headline targets are promoting employment, improving the conditions for innovation, research and development, meeting climate change and energy objectives, improving education levels and promoting social inclusion;
6. Stresses that employment policy is an area of national competence and that labour markets are structurally different;
7. Underlines that more focus should be placed on promoting entrepreneurial mindsets among students and researchers, making available new financial instruments for start-ups and fast-growing firms and supporting the introduction of successful technologies on the EU market;
8. Calls on the European Social Dialogue Committees to assist in better matching existing training to present and future demand through a road map setting out clear objectives and indicators for monitoring progress;
9. Draws attention to the Commission’s finding that the new technologies and developments in work organisation seem to result in a significant expansion in jobs at both ends of the job spectrum;

10. Regrets the fact that at a time of crisis Member States have reduced their education and training budgets, and urges the Commission and the Member States to invest more in education and training systems;
11. Draws attention to the lack of progress in reducing the numbers of people who, despite being employed, are living under the poverty threshold; calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote quality jobs that are well paid and offer secure and healthy working conditions;
12. Points out the importance of the proposed comprehensive life-long learning suggestions and the emphasis that has to be put on integration of ICT competences and digital literacy (e-skills) into core lifelong learning and education policies, in order to overcome the serious deficit in qualified personnel, such as ICT practitioners and researchers, which threatens to undermine the future economic competitiveness of the EU;
13. Stresses the need to involve employers in the management of education institutions and in the development of courses, teaching methods, apprenticeships, assessment and qualification; underlines the importance of incentives for employers who offer training for low-skilled or unskilled people and, consequently, of opportunities to acquire practical experience directly in the workplace;
14. Points to the fact, also recognised by the Commission, that significant investment in green skills need to be made in order to ensure that Europe meets its 2020 objectives for green-collar workers and to ensure that its economic system can operate in a more sustainable way and thus remain competitive in the future;
15. Underlines the need for education aimed at innovation; stresses that non-schematic and abstract thinking should be promoted, as well as the technical education needed to match the needs of the future;
16. Stresses that efforts should be made to ensure that all children develop fundamental IT skills at an early age, that IT should therefore be included in primary school education and that all Europeans should have cheap and easy access to the internet;
17. Calls on the Commission to support the 'Knowledge Alliances' in order to develop new training programmes that will bridge innovation skills gaps and meet job market needs;
18. Notes that, in order to achieve the goals of EU 2020, the Member States' response to the demands of industry in terms of the workforce needed must be more flexible;
19. Believes that, in the context of the strategy for prolonging active life, not enough is being done to help older people acquire IT skills, and urges the Commission and the Member States to develop broad-based educational programmes for this group;
20. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to strengthen the provision of vocational education and training across Europe in order to help provide the new skills needed in the labour market;
21. Observes that labour mobility among EU countries remains low, and calls on the

Commission to consider the establishment of a pan-European service to direct the skilled labour force to vacant posts across Europe, supporting a labour market of European added value. In this context, urges the Member States to eliminate the barriers to free movement of workers and calls for the full implementation of the 2012 Single Market projects proposed by the Commission; underlines the importance of a broader strategy combining job creation, meeting new and emerging needs on the European labour market, and eliminating labour restrictions inside the EU and the remaining barriers within the EU internal market;

22. Supports the Commission's proposal that European Sector Councils on employment and skills should be established to collect information held by the Member States and the regions in order to help coordinate the efforts of all parties concerned;
23. Stresses the need further to match skills with labour market needs; welcomes the Commission's initiative in this matter;
24. Given that it is estimated that in 2015 there will be a shortfall of IT professionals extending to between 384 000 and 700 000 jobs, while the estimated deficit for the health sector is of some one million professionals and that for researchers is another one million, calls on the Commission and the Member States to take measures to ensure the necessary level of skilled human resources in these fields;
25. Underlines the importance of SMEs and their contribution to job creation, and welcomes measures such as cutting down red tape designed to help in the setting up of new businesses. Highlights the important role that the EIB could play, in particular by fostering programmes such as JASMINE and JEREMIE, which can provide sustainable support for SMEs' needs; stresses the need to provide support for SMEs not only with finding people with the right skills but also with upgrading their skills; notes that in the context of the roadmap toward a resource-efficient Europe, SMEs needs support with upgrading their competences in terms of sustainable development and research and innovation;
26. Is of the opinion that SMEs can play, and are playing, a very important role in training both in highly specialised, innovative sectors and in those that require the basic manual skills needed for many services; notes that there is therefore a need for close cooperation between SMEs and educational establishments; takes the view that facilitation of financial assistance for internships and practical training in the SME sector should also be considered;
27. Stresses the importance of a free and intelligently regulated internet for new entrepreneurs and job creators; considers that internet users' confidence in the system and their trust that its integrity will not be compromised is crucial for new internet business models;
28. Points out that the European Union does not have enough R&D intensive innovative firms and that the serious lack of skills in innovation and digital literacy means that SMEs cannot adopt innovative smart business models and new technologies;
29. Stresses that current labour market trends in any given Member State are influenced by structural issues in that country, and that initiatives at European level should consequently take national specificities into consideration;

30. Calls on the Commission to observe the Think Small First principle and take the needs of SMEs into account when drawing up employment legislation;
31. In the face of rising unemployment, calls on the Member States to step up staffing levels in employment offices in order to deal with the increasing numbers of job seekers; believes that public employment offices can play a greater role as lifelong service providers, offering facilities for evaluating skills, establishing profiles and providing training, individual professional guidance and consultation services for clients (both workers and employers);
32. Calls on the Commission, pursuant to Article 152 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, to step up promotion of the role of management and labour in each industrial sector across Europe, while respecting their autonomy;
33. Considers that the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs should be seen in conjunction with the EU's Research Framework Programme, and that synergies between the two could create growth and jobs;
34. Supports, pursuant to Article 155 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), dialogue between management and labour and encourages them to enter into contractual relations, including agreements; recommends that in implementing agreements concluded at European level, management and labour in each industrial sector use the procedure laid down in Article 155(2) TFEU for matters covered by Article 153 TFEU;
35. Stresses the importance of partnerships at regional and local level that bring together public services, education and training providers and employers, from the viewpoint of reducing unemployment at regional and local level;

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	31.8.2011
Result of final vote	+: 43 -: 0 0: 7
Members present for the final vote	Jean-Pierre Audy, Bendt Bendtsen, Jan Březina, Maria Da Graça Carvalho, Giles Chichester, Pilar del Castillo Vera, Christian Ehler, Lena Ek, Ioan Enciu, Vicky Ford, Gaston Franco, Norbert Glante, Fiona Hall, Jacky Hélin, Edit Herczog, Romana Jordan Cizelj, Krišjānis Kariņš, Lena Kolarska-Bobińska, Philippe Lamberts, Bogdan Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz, Marisa Matias, Judith A. Merkies, Angelika Niebler, Jaroslav Paška, Aldo Patriciello, Miloslav Ransdorf, Herbert Reul, Teresa Riera Madurell, Michèle Rivasi, Paul Rübig, Konrad Szymański, Michael Theurer, Britta Thomsen, Patrizia Toia, Evžen Tošenovský, Claude Turmes, Niki Tzavela, Vladimir Urutchev, Kathleen Van Brempt, Alejo Vidal-Quadras, Henri Weber
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Francesco De Angelis, Satu Hassi, Jiří Havel, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Alajos Mészáros, Vladko Todorov Panayotov, Mario Pirillo, Silvia-Adriana Țicău, Lambert van Nistelrooij