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B6-0504/2007 }
B6-0506/2007 } RC1

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 103(4) of the Rules of Procedure, by

- Hartmut Nassauer and Joseph Daul, on behalf of the PPE-DE Group
- Hannes Swoboda and Martin Schulz, on behalf of the PSE Group
- Diana Wallis, Andrew Duff and Graham Watson, on behalf of the ALDE Group
- Brian Crowley and Cristiana Muscardini, on behalf of the UEN Group

replacing the motions by the following groups:

- PPE-DE (B6-0500/2007)
- PSE (B6-0502/2007)
- ALDE (B6-0504/2007)
- UEN (B6-0506/2007)

on the Commission's Legislative and Work Programme for 2008

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European Parliament resolution on the Commission's Legislative and Work Programme for 2008

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission Communication on its Legislative and Work Programme 2008 (COM(2007) 640),
 - having regard to the contributions made by Parliament's committees, which have been forwarded to the Commission by the Conference of Presidents,
 - having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the annual legislative and work programme is an important tool which allows the European Union to focus on achieving its key strategic objectives of fostering prosperity, solidarity, security, freedom and a stronger Europe in the world; whereas the Commission will be judged on the delivery of results in these fields,
- B. whereas in 2008 it will be crucial for the Reform Treaty to be ratified so that it can enter into force before the elections to the European Parliament,
- C. whereas political priorities should be matched with available financial resources,

General remarks

1. Welcomes the focused structure of the Commission Work Programme 2008 and the Commission's effort to continue improving the political content of the annual programme; requests, in this context, the inclusion in the future of an indicative timetable for the Commission's initiatives;
2. Supports the crucial importance accorded in the 2008 annual programme to growth and jobs, sustainable development, climate change, energy and migration, and the emphasis on better regulation, correct implementation and reinforcing the role of Europe as a world partner; asks the Commission, nevertheless, to be more ambitious in its initiatives aimed at securing fundamental rights, freedom, justice and social inclusion;
3. Underlines once again the importance of vigorous implementation of the Lisbon Strategy, emphasising the interdependence of economic, social and environmental progress in creating a dynamic and innovative economy; urges the Commission, therefore, to engage in a balanced and output-oriented Lisbon Community Programme 2008-2010;
4. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to supporting the ratification of the Reform Treaty; believes that the objectives and reforms enshrined in this treaty are essential for the sound functioning and future development of the Union and will render the EU more democratic and bring it closer to the citizen;
5. Calls on the Commission and the Council, jointly with the European Parliament and the Member State Parliaments, in the light of the new instruments offered by the Reform Treaty

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– for example to national Parliaments – to work on a new culture of subsidiarity;

Growth and jobs

6. Reiterates its calls for a European agenda where prosperity and solidarity are truly mutually supportive;
7. Calls on the Commission, following its single market review, to step up efforts to extend and deepen the internal market as a strong, innovative and competitive market; insists that the single market should be developed through fair competition, social cohesion and a high level of consumer protection;
8. Calls on the Commission to place particular emphasis on the timely and coherent implementation of the Services Directive, and in particular to implement effective Points of Single Contact to promote access to the Single Market; urges improvement in the effectiveness of rules on public procurement;
9. Stresses the importance, for better consumer protection, of improving market surveillance, in particular in order to establish strong credibility for CE marking and to tackle counterfeiting; encourages the Commission to continue to guarantee consumers' rights in product safety, focusing especially on safety of toys; urges the Commission to clarify legislative grey area, in fields such as on-line auctions; emphasises the need for the review of the consumer acquis to lead to a more coherent legal framework; supports a coordinated approach from the Commission in its ongoing work on a common frame of reference for more coherent European contract law;
10. Recommends examining very carefully and in close cooperation with Member States the business community and consumers, possible ways to enhance quick, efficient and fair resolution of conflicts between businesses and consumers, as simpler access to courts is vital for protecting the consumer in a globalised environment; stresses, however, that this process should not lead to the creation of new barriers to free movement in the internal market;
11. Urges the Commission not to sacrifice the social dimension of the Lisbon strategy by considering that it is a handicap to competitiveness, but requests the Commission to respect the balance between the different pillars of the Lisbon Strategy; believes that proper investment in knowledge creates a more prosperous economy which could fight such problems as poverty, social exclusion, unemployment and ensure better protection of workers;
12. Calls on the Commission, in the framework of the Social Reality Stocktaking, to identify initiatives for economic and social governance; welcomes the imminent proposed revision of the European Works Council Directive which should lead to clarification regarding information, consultation and participation, but calls strongly on the Commission to consult the European Social Partners in advance; calls for measures to promote a better balance between work and family life, as well as the health and safety of all workers;
13. Calls for increased efforts to move forward the Temporary Agency Workers Directive, and calls for an effective revision of the Working Time Directive to deal with the ECJ ruling on on-call time, in order to protect the needs of workers while preserving flexibility;

14. Strongly welcomes the Commission's announcement of a legislative proposal on the European Private Company and asks for this proposal to be presented early in 2008 in order to support SMEs; regrets that the Commission does not intend to proceed with the legislative proposal regarding the Fourteenth Company Law Directive (transfer of registered office), while stressing that this long-awaited directive would fill a gap in the internal market for companies;
15. Underlines the need for an adequate level of protection of intellectual property rights and supports the initiative towards an affordable, secure and efficient patent system which would give incentives for investment and research efforts; urges all three institutions to work together towards a political consensus on a real improvement of the patent system; recalls that the counterfeiting of products, for example drugs, is a major problem and an urgent issue of European concern;
16. Regrets that the Commission is not intending to propose an initiative regarding the creation of a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base, which would complete the achievements of an internal market with fair competition in leading to greater transparency by enabling companies to operate according to the same rules abroad as at home, and increasing cross-border trade, as well as competition, between Member States as far as attracting investment is concerned; at the same time underlines Member States' responsibility for setting corporate tax rates;
17. Asks the Commission to put forward proposals which could effectively improve European prudential supervision, including that of hedge funds and rating agencies; recalls the considerable consequences of the sub-prime mortgage crisis in the United States for European financial markets; expects the Commission to conduct a thorough analysis of the origins and consequences of this crisis, including a risk assessment for the European markets; requests an evaluation of the current systems and instruments of prudential supervision in Europe, and insists on close consultation with Parliament, leading to clear recommendations on how to improve the stability of the financial system and its ability to provide secure long-term finance for European business;
18. Regards the revision of the 'telecoms package' as a key priority in the coming year;
19. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to the creation of a liberalised and integrated internal market in energy; considers also that a distinction should be made between the evolution of the electric energy market and the gas market;

A sustainable Europe

20. Welcomes the Commission's ambitious proposals on climate change and encourages the Commission to deliver them in full; asks the Commission to enhance the synergies between employment and industrial development on the one hand and development and use of clean technologies on the other, as complementarities are strong and a potential source of increased competitiveness;
21. Calls for a comprehensive and overall legislative framework for the promotion and the use of renewable energy in the European Union, including binding targets, that will provide the

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business community with the long-term stability it needs in order to make rational investment decisions in the renewable energy sector so as to put the European Union on track towards a cleaner, more secure and more competitive energy future;

22. Notes that the Commission actions listed in the Energy Efficiency Action Plan and Biomass Action Plan are not included in the Commission's 2008 Work Programme and notes the severe delays in implementing the pledged actions; calls on the Commission to take both action plans fully into account, thereby helping the EU to meet renewable energy and energy efficiency objectives; underlines the important contribution that can be made by sustainable biofuels in this respect;
23. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to finding a political agreement on the 'burden-sharing' required to achieve a 20% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2020 as against 1990; strongly advocates reinforced efforts by the EU and its Member States and regions to support CO₂-free energy sources;
24. Welcomes the Commission's plan to publish a 'Green Transport Package', bearing in mind that sustainable mobility across the EU must be ensured in accordance with the fight against climate change;
25. Supports the two priority initiatives on maritime transport and air transport; recalls that administrative simplification for short sea shipping is an essential lead-up factor to the real development of this mode of transport, which is a fundamental link in the establishment of an integrated, coherent and sustainable network system; is pleased with the various proposals aiming at promoting greater effectiveness of air transport management, leading to a significant reduction in costs, delays and greenhouse gas emissions;
26. Welcomes the Commission's initiatives in the area of public health, in particular the envisaged legislative proposal on quality and safety of organ donation and transplantation, as well as the proposed Council recommendation on healthcare-associated infections included in the 'Health package', aimed at ensuring the highest possible levels of patient safety and quality of care; asks the Commission to contribute to the reinforcement of patient safety, patient information, patients' rights and patient safeguarding and to tackle the determinants of rare diseases;
27. Calls on the Commission intensify its efforts to work out a coherent policy with regard to emergencies in the health sector, people with disabilities or chronic illnesses and information to patients; calls on the Commission to pay particular attention to the pandemic-preparedness issue;
28. Welcomes the Commission's Communication on the CAP 'Health Check', especially in view of the importance of a competitive and environmentally sustainable agricultural sector and of preventing rural depopulation and securing consumer's access to food supply, but stresses that the precise nature of any legislative proposals to follow should not be defined until such time as Parliament, the Commission and the Council have concluded a thorough debate on the Commission's initial 'Health Check' Communication;
29. Calls on the Commission to define specific proposals on the implications and the detailed rules of the MSY model (Maximum Sustainable Yield), to propose concrete legislative

proposals on the eco-labelling scheme and to put forward, within the shortest possible period, a proposal for simplification of rule 850/98 on technical measures in the fisheries sector and towards the recasting and strengthening of the control framework of the CFP;

30. Strongly supports the Commission's initiative to present a Green Paper on European territorial cohesion, as requested by the European Parliament; believes that the concept of territorial cohesion, which was recently endorsed by the Lisbon Treaty, will be central to the development of this Community policy;
31. Underlines the need for an EU Baltic Sea Strategy and calls on the Commission to present an EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region during 2008;

An integrated approach to immigration

32. Believes that a common migration, visa and asylum policy and effective economic, social and political integration of immigrants on the basis of common principles are two sides of the same coin and represent key challenges, while fully respecting, in particular with regard to integration, the division of responsibilities between Member States and the EU;
33. Calls on the Commission to strengthen measures for tackling human trafficking and illegal immigration, and in particular to examine the implementation of the Council's 2005 Action Plan in this area; awaits from the Commission the evaluation on the implementation of the free movement directive due in 2008 and asks for further measures to ensure the full application of this right in the EU;
34. Welcomes the Commission's renewed commitment to a common policy on migration, common tools to protect external borders, and a Common Asylum Policy; invites the Commission to further improve education and integration policies in order to establish a clear and safe framework for economic immigrants, notably skilled workers, which clarifies their obligations and rights;
35. Considers that as of 1 January 2009 the new Treaty will substantially modify the institutional framework concerning the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, and recalls that the year 2008 will be very important for the implementation of the Schengen acquis and its expansion to the new EU Member States; stresses that rigorous measures must be taken to ensure the smooth functioning of the system and the integrity of the EU's external borders; invites the Commission to deeply involve the EP and the national parliaments in developing these provisions;
36. Notes that the Work Programme does not mention the future EU PNR system and calls for greater operational cooperation at European level in the fight against terrorism and an increase, where appropriate, in the involvement of the EP; stresses that effective and enforceable data protection instruments are not to be seen as obstacles in the fight against terrorism or any sort of radicalisation but as indispensable confidence-boosting mechanisms in the exchange of information between law enforcement agencies;

Putting citizens first

37. Considers that the Commission should continue to focus the attention of citizens on the importance of cultural diversity and therefore of dialogue between cultures in an enlarged Union; considers that the intercultural dialogue should also be reinforced outside Europe's borders and become a bridge able to favour mutual comprehension and therefore help the prevention or resolution of social and human conflicts;
38. Notes that the Commission's priorities for 2008 highlight the potential contribution of lifelong learning (LLL) to raising employment rates and to developing a knowledge society in line with the Lisbon goals; regrets that this is not reflected in a single concrete proposal; considers that minors should be protected from the special content of some programmes in using the internet and new technologies by means of specific and appropriate filter systems;
39. Suggests the creation of a European force that could immediately react in emergencies, as proposed in the Barnier report; asks the Commission to formulate a concrete proposal to this end;
40. Underlines the necessity to strengthen the rights of passengers, in particular long-distance coach passengers;
41. Looks forward to the Commission's proposal to put forward a significant directive implementing the principle of equal treatment outside employment, thereby completing the non-discrimination legal framework whilst underlining that Member States' competences in this area must be respected;

Europe as a world partner

42. Considers that the EU's role in promoting respect for human rights, democracy and good governance must be regarded as an integral part of all EU policies and programmes;
43. Welcomes the fact that the Commission's work programme stresses the need to continue the enlargement process and regards the Western Balkans as a priority area;
44. Notes the Commission's intention of paying particular attention to the future of Kosovo and expects it to present further evaluations and proposals on EU assistance to Kosovo as the situation evolves;
45. Considers that Black Sea Synergy is an important first step in elaborating a comprehensive strategy vis-à-vis the region and calls on the European Commission to develop further specific proposals, including an action plan with specific objectives and benchmarks to enhance cooperation between the EU and the countries of the Black Sea region;
46. Considers the transatlantic link to be fundamental to both the promotion of shared values and the defence of common interests;
47. With regard to the Middle East, takes the view that – apart from providing funds for economic survival and reconstruction, notably in Lebanon and Palestine – the EU should continue to develop political initiatives to increase further its active diplomatic role in the region;

48. Believes that further steps towards a common external energy policy should be taken in order to ensure access to sustainable, secure and competitive energy for all Member States, and asks the Commission to take a clear and constructive approach in the dialogue with Russia;
49. Asks the Commission to strengthen the bi-regional strategic partnership between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean, and welcomes the inclusion of the EU-Africa strategy as a priority for the Commission, while stressing the need for involvement of parliaments and civil society;
50. Stresses the need for policy coherence regarding EU development policy; underlines that development issues need to be taken into account in the framework of other European policies; welcomes the Commission's intention of examining new avenues to implement the Millennium Development Goals; urges the Commission to ensure that its development policies have a positive impact on peace-building;
51. Emphasises the need for a successful conclusion to the Doha Round; underlines that the EU also needs to reinforce its engagement with the emerging economies through bilateral or regional free trade agreements, seen as a complementary tool of the multilateral approach, while asking for provisions on the implementation of core labour standards to be included; regards a comprehensive new strategy on China as important; takes the view that trade has to be free and fair; calls on the Commission to provide stronger protection for Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) and to do its utmost to combat counterfeiting;

Horizontal issues

52. Welcomes the Commission's determination to reach the goal of a 25% reduction of administrative burdens on businesses originating at EU and Member State level by 2012; regards this as a key priority, in particular for SMEs, for the coming months and as an essential contribution to reaching the Lisbon targets; underlines that it will examine legislative proposals in this light; urges the Commission to present a detailed scoreboard on the implementation of its action plan containing clear and concise information on targets reached, indicators developed, outcomes of baseline measurements and concrete proposals for subsequent areas most suitable for further rapid, sustainable and tangible reduction of administrative costs;
53. Supports the Commission for its continuing efforts to improving the quality of EU legislation; underlines the need to accelerate the simplification and consolidation of EU legislation and to put more effort into better regulation, prompt transposition and correct implementation of EU legislation, whilst fully respecting the EP's prerogatives; calls for a stronger mechanism to monitor and enforce implementation of European legislation in the Member States;
54. Underlines that the principle of subsidiarity as currently enshrined in the EC Treaty clearly states that in areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the Community is entitled to act only in so far as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States; underlines that non-action by Member States does not in itself create EU competence;

55. Insists on independent assessments of the consequences of legislation; considers that they must be systematically carried out in the context of a legislative process and also in the process of simplifying legislation;
56. Notes that the dossiers contained in the Commission's list of pending proposals to be withdrawn are in any case obsolete;
57. Asks the Commission and Council to give Parliament the necessary time to issue its opinion on future enlargements of the Eurozone;
58. Insists on the proper implementation of the new comitology procedure and the safeguarding of Parliament's rights in this respect; attaches particular importance to the comitology procedures in the field of financial services (the Lamfalussy procedure), as a number of important dossiers are undergoing fine-tuning; takes the view that the correct application of the framework is essential for the smooth functioning of the financial system and for avoiding financial crisis; demands that the rights of Parliament such as agreed upon are respected to the full and that the present agreements are filled with life;
59. Awaits with interest the results of the consultation process initiated by the Commission on 'Reforming the Budget, Changing Europe' (SEC(2007)1188); demands the full association of Parliament with the review both of EU spending and of the EU own resources system as provided for in Declaration No 3 on the Review of the Financial Framework of the IIA (Interinstitutional Agreement on budgetary discipline and sound financial management);
60. In order to achieve a Positive Statement of Assurance by the ECA, the Commission should undertake the technical preparations and urge the Member States to issue national declarations as suggested in Parliament's 2003, 2004 and 2005 Discharge resolutions, regards the audit summaries as requested in paragraph 44 of the Interinstitutional Agreement for 2007-2013 only as a first step into this direction; expects a more proactive approach by the Commissioner responsible in the field of transparency and good governance; notes furthermore that the Commission feels itself bound by and committed to the highest standards of sound financial management;

Communicating Europe

61. Urges the Commission to put the citizen at the centre of the European project, which it will only succeed in by listening to the concerns of Europeans, and to intensify its efforts to develop a more effective communication policy in order to achieve a better understanding by citizens of EU action and its contribution to addressing their concerns with a view to preparing the way for ratification of the Reform Treaty and the European elections in 2009;
62. Calls on the Commission to set out clearly how it intends to put into practice the content of its communication priorities, particularly the priority relating to the Reform Treaty;
63. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to Council, the Commission and the Parliaments of the Member States.