

P6_TA(2008)0057

Lisbon Strategy

European Parliament resolution of 20 February 2008 on the input for the 2008 Spring Council as regards the Lisbon Strategy

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission’s strategic package for the Lisbon Strategy comprising the strategic report on the renewed Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs and launching the new cycle (2008-2010), the assessment of national reform programmes and the integrated guidelines for growth and jobs (2008-2010) set out in its communication to the Spring European Council (COM(2007)0803), and the Commission communication on a Proposal for a Community Lisbon Programme 2008-2010 (COM(2007)0804), ,
 - having regard to the Commission communication on The European Interest: Succeeding in the age of globalisation (COM(2007)0581),
 - having regard to the Commission communication on Member States and Regions delivering the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs through EU cohesion policy, 2007-2013 (COM(2007)0798)
 - having regard to the 27 Lisbon national reform programmes (NRPs) for 2005-2008 as presented by the Member States,
 - having regard to the European Council conclusions of 23 and 24 March 2000, 23 and 24 March 2001, 22 and 23 March 2005, 23 and 24 March 2006 and 8 and 9 March 2007, as well as the outcome of discussions at the Informal European Council of 27 October 2005,
 - having regard to its resolution of 15 November 2007 on the European interest: succeeding in the age of globalisation¹,
 - having regard to the 4th Joint Parliamentary Meeting held in Brussels on 11 and 12 February 2008,
 - having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Commission promised to take full account of the views expressed by Parliament in its resolutions concerning the Lisbon Strategy, in particular its resolution on globalisation of 15 November 2007,
- B. whereas Parliament, in its previous resolutions, has shown strong support for the Lisbon Strategy, and has especially welcomed the refocused approach centred around the strategy for growth and jobs,
- C. whereas there is a strong interrelationship between economic growth, employment, the fight against poverty and social inclusion,
- D. whereas the European Union and the Member States have a shared responsibility for

¹ Texts adopted, P6_TA(2007)0533.

addressing the challenges, opportunities and uncertainties of citizens regarding globalisation; whereas the European Union must take its political responsibility as a global player and contribute to achieving and shaping sustainable development in the world in the age of globalisation so that people everywhere can harness the opportunities offered by globalisation,

- E. whereas the internal market is one important and efficient tool for building a dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy and buttressing Europe's competitive position in the global market in order to improve the quality of life for its citizens,
- F. whereas this Resolution, in accordance with the mandate of Parliament's Lisbon Strategy Coordination Group, and respecting the competencies of other Parliament committees, will not address details of ongoing legislation and consultation processes,

General considerations

1. Underlines, once again, the importance of a vigorous implementation of the Lisbon Strategy, emphasising the interdependence of economic, social and environmental progress in creating a dynamic and innovative sustainable economy;
2. Believes that economic development and future prosperity in Europe depend on the way in which better conditions for sustainable growth and job creation are created and the opportunities and challenges emerging from globalisation, demographic change and global environmental threats are met; believes that the European Union's common tool is the renewed Lisbon Strategy and the integrated guidelines;
3. Believes that in order to guarantee the success of the renewed Lisbon Strategy, it is also necessary to strengthen Europe's growth and to overcome insufficient domestic demand, which must be achieved via increases in revenues linked to increases in productivity and employment;
4. Acknowledges that the European Union faces many challenges in the period ahead: a population which will start to decline by about 2020, increased economic pressure from global competitors, increased energy prices, climate change and social imbalances; takes the view that Europe must respond to these challenges with the right policy mix;
5. Notes that the Lisbon Strategy is developing positively; notes also, however, that there are still shortcomings in its implementation and no proper understanding of the fact that the European process of development towards more growth, job creation, adequate social security and appropriate environmental protection is still not immune to crises;
6. Points out that, as the world's largest exporter and importer of goods, largest exporter of services and second largest destination and origin of foreign direct investment, the European Union is one of the major beneficiaries of the open world economy; considers that, as such, the European Union has a strong responsibility for tackling global issues;
7. Welcomes the global dimension of the Lisbon process and notes that the Lisbon Strategy represents a European response to the opportunities and risks inherent in globalisation; in that connection, particularly emphasises the importance of transatlantic cooperation, as well as of improving cooperation with other major players such as China, India, Brazil and other economic areas of the world;

8. Calls for agreed rules and practices in world trade that are compatible with the Millennium Development Goals and with the responsibility for leading the fight against climate change and promoting health; calls, in principle, for measures to be taken to combat protectionism both inside and outside the European Union; calls for collaboration and a fair approach to pursuing the Doha Round negotiations;
9. Stresses the undeniable value of a consistent stability and growth policy and the importance of macroeconomic stability as a source of the confidence that is the basis for achieving the Lisbon Strategy objectives; points out that, in the interest of macro-economic stability, the rise in productivity must go hand in hand with fairer distribution and a strengthening of social cohesion; draws attention, in this connection, to the call for the rise in incomes to keep pace with medium-term growth in productivity;
10. Underlines, as does the Commission, that the Member States' economies are highly interdependent and that the argument for a common reform agenda is strongest in the euro area;
11. Points to the overriding importance of safeguarding the stability of financial markets, and notes that the recent subprime crisis shows the need for the European Union to develop oversight measures in order to strengthen the transparency and stability of the financial markets and better protect customers; 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;
12. Points out that subsidiarity is important to allow Member States to adapt commonly agreed policies on both security and flexibility to the specific practices and traditions of their national labour markets;
13. Recalls that cohesion policy is a fundamental principle of the treaties and a tool for achieving the Lisbon Strategy objectives for growth and jobs, up to 75 % of cohesion policy funds being earmarked for innovation and Lisbon Strategy objectives; considers that the leverage of cohesion policy in general, and the structural and cohesion funds in particular, must be used for the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy at regional level and that the results of this process need to be monitored closely at the regional and local levels; considers that the current favourable economic development should spur further reforms; stresses the need to examine the effect of the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy at regional level, 2008 being the first year when the preliminary results of the cohesion policy's earmarking exercise can be evaluated;
14. Considers that scientific and technological research forms one of the key elements of the Lisbon Strategy; agrees on the extreme importance of boosting research and development (R&D) and that Member States should take additional measures to meet their R&D investment targets for 2010 by indicating how national R&D investment targets for 2010 will be met and how their R&D strategies will contribute to realising a European research area; emphasises that the necessary move towards an energy-efficient, low-carbon economy based also on renewable sources through the development and implementation of new technologies will create diverse opportunities for the European Union; notes the huge opportunities afforded to the European economy by the development and roll-out of new technologies and services that will further the decarbonisation of the global economy; welcomes, in this context, the proposal by the Commission to establish a "fifth freedom",

the freedom of knowledge , completing the four freedoms of movement of goods, services, people and capital, and to pool EU and Member State R&D resources to ensure their more effective use;

15. Welcomes recent initiatives and investments in industrial and research policy; in this context, welcomes the establishment of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology and the recent investment in Galileo as efficient means for combining technology innovation needs with industry's research agenda; endorses the European Global Navigation Satellite System programmes (Galileo and the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service) as key EU projects; underlines the economic and public merits of these programmes and the benefits of new services and markets that they provide;
16. Considers that networks of excellence are needed in order to secure Europe's leading position in the economic and technological fields; believes that the Member States and regions should support the development of clusters of excellence and measures to encourage competition and cooperation among them in order to boost further the culture of innovation; believes that the Commission, Member States and regional and local authorities should take further steps actively to support closer cooperation between public authorities, research institutions, universities and industry;
17. Underlines the importance of Europe's businesses, citizens and authorities successfully completing their transition to the digital era and truly achieving the knowledge-based society and economy called for in the Lisbon Strategy; calls for science and technology to be further developed in the everyday lives of citizens and for an inclusive knowledge society for all to be promoted;
18. Urges the Member States' governments and their regional administrations, as the largest employers, buyers and service providers in the internal market, to drive innovation by creating pilot markets for innovative products and services;
19. Notes that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a crucial role in creating new jobs and in exploiting new research; strongly endorses the Commission's proposed Small Business Act as a vehicle for creating opportunities for SMEs, encouraging the "think small first" culture and setting out an integrated policy approach in order to unlock the growth potential at every stage of the life-cycle of SMEs;
20. Highlights the potential to help SMEs by reducing their regulatory burden, improving their access to public contracts and developing a more favourable regime for funding and exploiting innovation;
21. Acknowledges that within the European Union, innovative technologies must be more swiftly translated into new products and services; supports, therefore, the Commission's demand for a 'knowledge triangle' made up of research, education and innovation; expects more effective investment in new skills, lifelong learning and modern education/training systems;
22. Welcomes the fact that the Commission has undertaken to reduce the regulatory burden and is aiming at better regulation and encouraging Member States to adopt similar measures without putting in danger citizens' participatory rights and consumer protection; expects the Council and the Commission to meet their commitments as set out in the Interinstitutional

Agreement on better law-making¹; notes with deep concern that a number of recent significant legislative proposals from the Commission have been put forward without prior impact assessments or adequate evaluation of the effects of earlier legislation in the same area;

23. Underlines in this context the need for a new, comprehensive external and trade policy approach that focuses on worldwide convergence of rules, standards and regulatory cooperation; emphasises that Europe must maximise its potential as a springboard for businesses entering global markets and as an attractive location for investors; requests, furthermore, that all EU bilateral or regional trade agreements under negotiation include enforceable provisions on the implementation of core labour standards and other aspects of decent work, as well as of multilateral environmental standards;
24. Reiterates, once again, its belief that, in order to create a society responsive to change, the role of a more inclusive style of economic decision-making will be crucial; recalls the conclusions of the Spring 2005 European Council emphasising that a high level of social protection is central to the Lisbon Strategy; reaffirms that it is unacceptable that people should be living below the poverty line and in a position of social exclusion; reaffirms that all European citizens should have access to decent work and a decent life, even after retirement; supports further action to reinforce policies to combat poverty and social exclusion, with a view to adopting a comprehensive approach to renewing the decisive momentum given to the elimination of poverty by 2010 and to enabling all European citizens to gain access to their fundamental rights; highlights the legally binding incorporation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union in the Treaty of Lisbon; asks for a commitment by the Spring 2008 European Council for an ambitious social agenda with a concrete impact on the results of the Lisbon Strategy;
25. Reiterates – given that social and territorial cohesion is one of the essential components of the internal market – the importance of boosting citizens’ confidence by promoting social and environmental objectives common to the Member States, such as high-quality jobs, equality of opportunity, and protection of health and the environment, while respecting European cultural diversity; calls on the Commission to ensure that the EU performs its protective function in these areas and that regulatory competition among the Member States is avoided;
26. Believes that further integration of the transport sector into the Lisbon Strategy is necessary; insists that priority be given under the new integrated policy guidelines to sustainable transport, logistics and the development of the trans-European networks, and calls upon the Member States to ensure that the national plans submitted at the forthcoming Spring 2008 European Council reflect these priorities;

The internal market and strategic responses to globalisation

27. Stresses that a smoothly functioning internal market, a highly qualified workforce, a well-balanced social market economy and democratic stability are the strongest competitive advantage for Europe; points out that for third-country investors the internal market offers advantages such as a level playing field and free movement, but that access to the internal market should be accompanied by a similar openness to EU investors on the part of third countries with developed and emerging economies; notes that, in addition, best framework

¹ OJ C 321, 31.12.2003, p 1.

conditions for European enterprises need to be created, including better regulation, good governance, sound and fair competition, efficiently functioning venture-capital markets and commercialisation of the results of research and innovation;

28. Urges the Member States to place the European Union's competitiveness at the heart of their policy-making and to make the completion of the internal market a priority, particularly through timely and appropriate implementation of internal market directives and the removal of unjustified barriers to national markets; recalls, however, that the establishment of the internal market was based on competition, cooperation and solidarity, which remain the basic preconditions for further achievements of the internal market in the twenty-first century; stresses that the internal market must be developed through fair competition rules, efficient fiscal and social protection systems and a high level of consumer protection;
29. Emphasises the need to complete the internal market and carry out the necessary reforms; calls on the Member States to endorse the remaining measures necessary to create an internal market in services, including financial services, and to ensure that their national regulators encourage new providers and products while ensuring a level playing field and appropriate transparency and legal certainty for the interests of individual investors; takes the view that new policy initiatives to complete the internal market should be more driven by an analysis of the impact they have on markets, economic sectors, the environment and the social sphere;
30. Underlines the need for an adequate level of protection of intellectual property rights and supports the initiative towards an affordable, secure and efficient patents system which would give incentives for investment and research efforts and foster capacity for innovation, in particular for SMEs; urges the three institutions to work together towards a political consensus on a real improvement of the patents system, by which citizens can profit from new products and services at affordable prices;
31. Notes that market-based instruments (MBIs) include a wide range of policy tools that are increasingly being used to achieve environmental objectives; takes the view that MBIs such as taxes, charges and emissions trading can foster an efficient allocation of natural resources and can contribute, in this context, to achieving the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy;
32. Reiterates its view on the benefits of shifting the tax burden from labour to environmental degradation as an effective way to address both environmental and employment issues, and is of the opinion that the burden on labour must be diminished in order to create more jobs and fight the black economy;
33. Notes that the objectives of energy supply security and providing Europe's citizens with reasonably priced, sustainable mobility and energy and maintaining fair prices can be achieved via the same strategy as ambitious climate protection;
34. Calls on the Commission, in consequence, to implement consistently and rapidly the decisions of the 2007 Spring European Council and to make renewable energy and energy efficiency the priorities in reality of a common energy policy;
35. Points out that a major task of the European Union and the other industrialised countries is to switch to a low-energy-intensive economy based on renewable sources of energy, and that an efficient way of approaching this is the application of technologies which are already

at hand, but for which we need bold policy action in order to implement them, including incentives and multilaterally agreed sanctions applying to those countries which are not ready to bear their share of the burden; emphasises that the necessary shift towards a sustainable, low-energy-intensive and low-carbon economy by means of the development and implementation of new technologies will create various opportunities for the European Union;

36. Emphasises the importance of transport policy for fighting climate change and addressing a broader set of environmental concerns, advocates policies that reduce unnecessary transport through a variety of measures and calls for Trans-European Transport Networks to be subject to a thorough strategic environmental impact assessment;
37. Calls on the Member States rapidly to expand the interconnected, interoperable Trans-European Transport Networks with particular regard to the needs in the new Member States within an efficient, sustainable and environmentally friendly transport policy; calls on the Commission and the Member States to apply the appropriate policy mix in order fully to exploit the potential of environmentally friendly, intelligent transport systems and technological innovations;
38. Points out that it is, therefore, crucial to ensure that future demand for logistics services is compatible with a smaller environmental impact and reduced greenhouse gas emissions; takes the view that sustainable transport relies on the ability of political decision-makers at the European, national and regional levels to provide efficient incentives for transport buyers, transporters and vehicle manufacturers to continue their efforts to create a more environmentally friendly logistics market;

The labour market and investment in people

39. Recognises that the EU Strategy for Growth and Jobs is showing benefits, but stresses, at the same time, that not all EU citizens have benefited thereunder; stresses that in order to face globalisation and the challenge of demographic change it is of the utmost importance to provide people with the necessary skills and opportunities in order attract more people into the labour market and make work a real option for everyone, especially through measures targeting people who are furthest away from the labour market;
40. Stresses that in order to ensure free movement and mobility on the labour market, the Council needs to adopt the directives on the organisation of working time, working conditions for temporary workers and the portability of pension rights and should revise Council Directive 94/45/EC of 22 September 1994 on the establishment of a European Works Council¹ without delay; stresses that the removal of barriers to mobility on the European labour market allows greater protection for the European workforce; notes that the European Union must make an effort to explain to citizens the benefits of an approach that effectively combines enlargement, integration, solidarity and labour mobility;
41. Reaffirms that Europe cannot afford the present high unemployment figures; notes that the European social model will not remain untouched by the upheavals that are happening worldwide; takes the view that, in order to face demographic challenge and secure sustainable public finances, Europe must pursue reforms of the labour markets and welfare systems so as to strengthen the incentives to work and provide people with the opportunities

¹ OJ L 254 , 30.09.1994, p.64.

and skills to cope with change and facilitate their return to paid work; points out that, in order to maintain its competitiveness on the world scene, the European Union must undertake numerous reforms; believes that the level of trust between enterprises and workers that is needed for this course of action will increase as the social dialogue intensifies; underlines the importance of implementing the agreed common principles of flexicurity in a comprehensive and balanced way for both employees and employers;

42. Stresses that flexible working is increasingly demanded by both employers and employees, and supports the adoption of a balanced set of common principles regarding flexicurity; recalls that education, qualification and training form part of best employment policy and that childcare infrastructure is to be regarded as one of the preconditions for increasing participation, particularly by women in the labour market; encourages the Member States to mainstream these common principles in consultation with the social partners regarding their NRPs, and highlights the central role of work-life balance measures, the promotion of equal opportunities for all, training and retraining, active labour market policies, adequate social protection and the breakdown of labour market segmentation by ensuring employment rights for all workers;
43. Acknowledges the contribution of flexible, mobile, secure and efficiently functioning labour markets to social inclusion through the creation of employment opportunities for all groups in society; urges the Member States, therefore, to assess and improve employment regulations and invest in education, lifelong learning and active labour market policies so as to create the best possible conditions for high employment and labour mobility; emphasises the need to raise the basic skills of young people, prevent early school leaving, reduce precarious jobs and enhance the social and labour integration of all; points out that in the context of the 21st century's information society and knowledge-based economy, digital inclusion is of outstanding importance, particularly with regard to the disadvantaged, the elderly and the inhabitants of remote rural areas;
44. Notes with concern the trend towards widening inequality of income and wealth in the Member States; believes that such a trend should be reversed by appropriate national and European action to achieve a more cohesive society and to ensure that citizens perceive that they are benefiting from growth;
45. Notes that some Member States have introduced the concept of a minimum wage; suggests that other Member States might benefit from studying their experience; calls on the Member States to safeguard the preconditions for social and economic participation for all and, in particular, to provide for regulations on such matters as minimum wages or other legal and generally binding arrangements or through collective agreements in accordance with national traditions that enable full-time workers to make a decent living from their earnings;
46. Welcomes the Commission Communication on a Proposal for a Community Lisbon Programme 2008-2010 in that it proposes a more prioritised programme with only ten key objectives, which can be delivered during the period 2008-2010; underlines, however, that the major opportunity offered by the Lisbon Strategy is that of interconnecting different reform necessities and economic, environmental and employment instruments into a single reform agenda; calls on the Commission, therefore, to retain that coherent and integrative policy-mix approach and not to dismantle it by a move towards isolated policy measures;

Measuring progress and monitoring Lisbon

47. Welcomes the Commission's efforts to reduce bureaucracy, in particular with a view to helping SMEs, and to improve legislative impact assessment; at the same time, deplores the fact that Parliament and the Commission have still not reached agreement on the type of impact assessment required; in that connection, reiterates its call for independent, external scrutiny of impact assessments;
48. Welcomes the Commission's target of reducing the administrative burden on business; looks forward to receiving concrete indications of how that target is being achieved while ensuring conditions of good governance; stresses that all levels of government can contribute to achieving that target and should therefore be involved in related policy decisions; calls, in connection with reducing bureaucracy and simplifying European legislation, for clear monitoring with a view to determining to what extent the leeway offered by European legislative acts is actually exploited by the Member States to take account of national specificities and innovation bottlenecks when transposing them;
49. Considers that Member States, together with stakeholders at national, regional and local level, are the main actors in delivering the Lisbon Strategy objectives; points out that those countries which are open to external competition, implementing reforms and pursuing budgetary balance, as well as high-quality public and private investment, are the ones that have experienced the greatest growth and created the most employment; regrets the fact that visibility of the Lisbon Strategy remains weak in the national politics of many Member States; takes the view that the mobilisation of all economic stakeholders is essential to ensuring its effective implementation; in particular, believes that a better involvement of social partners, national parliaments, regional and local authorities, and civil society would improve the results of the Lisbon Strategy and enhance the public debate on appropriate reforms; supports the Commission's proposal to the Member States to deepen the collaboration with national and regional parliaments, while providing for annual debates on the implementation of their NRPs;
50. Stresses the importance of the commitment of regional and local authorities and stakeholders to both the range and the innovative character of achievements; welcomes, in this context, the strong interest of the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions in monitoring the Lisbon Strategy;
51. Recalls that the integrated guidelines provide an important instrument of coordination and a common framework for diverse Member States to pursue their own national reform agendas; considers that analysis and feedback from Member States show that the guidelines are working, but that improvements are nevertheless needed when it comes to adapting to new economic and employment conditions as well as following up (benchmarking) the Member States; calls for a more comprehensive application and implementation of indicators and targets;
52. Welcomes the country reports drawn up by the Commission; calls, however, for a more systematic approach which highlights successes as well as shortcomings; supports the Commission's proposal to introduce particular 'points to watch' as part of multilateral surveillance, also providing a chance to improve national policy responses;
53. Regards the lack of proper monitoring as a major obstacle to well-informed policy choices; underlines in this respect that much better use could be made of the expertise and knowledge available within the European decentralised agencies in the fields of their competencies;

54. Welcomes, therefore, the Spring 2006 European Council decision to remedy the lack of monitoring data by instructing the Committee of the Regions to draft a study monitoring the 'Growth and Jobs Strategy', which involved 104 EU regions and cities sharing their views on the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy – a study to be presented to the Spring 2008 European Council; underlines that the study shows whether the Structural Funds' earmarking provision helps channel a greater share of Structural Fund expenditure towards innovation and environmental goals; awaits the evaluation in the study of the added value of the regionalisation of the Lisbon Strategy;
55. Believes that it is not at all self-evident how to measure the success of the Lisbon Strategy or, more generally speaking, which indicators would be appropriate ways to measure 'progress'; takes the definite view, however, that monitoring successes and failures cannot be restricted to economic indicators such as GDP/GNI alone, since they are – at best – indicators of wealth creation over a given period, but do not even give reliable information about the level of wealth in a society, and far from give any hint of the social and environmental costs at which such additional wealth creation comes;
56. States that there is a need to develop and apply a multidimensional approach to assessing human wellbeing beyond the realm of GDP/GNI; welcomes, therefore, the deliberations of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development at its Second World Forum on 'Statistics, Knowledge and Policy', entitled, 'Measuring and Fostering the Progress of Societies' in June 2007 and the discussions at the Commission Conference 'Beyond GDP' held in Parliament in November 2007, because reliable data are an important basis for informed political choices;
57. Welcomes, therefore, the work undertaken by various Commission Directorate Generals in developing new qualitative indicators; urges that those indicators – whether they relate to the social dimension, like the poverty indicator, or the environmental dimension, like the biodiversity indicator – be used in upcoming evaluations of the NRPs and incorporated in the Commission's monitoring, thereby creating a more complete set of indicators to measure the success of the Lisbon Strategy;
58. Insists on guarantees of proper cooperation between, and full involvement of, the three EU institutions in the follow-up to the Lisbon Strategy; urges the Council and the Commission to acknowledge the role of the European Parliament, which is closely monitoring the Lisbon Strategy and NRPs, ensuring important budgetary resources for the Lisbon goals and cooperating closely with national parliaments on important legislative provisions;
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59. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and candidate countries.