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Europe 2020

Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

The European Parliament,

– having regard to the Commission's communication 'EU 2020: a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth',

– having regard to the Commission's communication 'Annual Growth Survey: advancing the EU's comprehensive response to the crisis',

– having regard to the Presidency conclusions following the meeting of the European Council on 17/18 June 2010,

– having regard to the Presidency conclusions following the meeting of the European Council in March 2000, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2007 and December 2009,

– having regard to its resolution of 16 June 2010 on economic governance and EU 2020,

– having regard to its resolution of 20 October 2010 on the financial, economic and social crisis,

– having regard to its resolution of 16 December 2010 on the permanent crisis mechanism,

– having regard to article 3 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union,

– having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

– having regard to the Council recommendation on the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines of the Member States and of the Union adopted on 7 July 2010,

– having regard to the Council decision on guidelines for employment policies of the Member States,

A. whereas some international partners are currently getting out of the crisis, the EU is still facing difficulties despite some tenuous signs of recovery,

B. whereas 2010 was the first year of entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, designed to close the gap between the EU and its citizens give the EU a new role on the international stage,

C. whereas the EU 2020 Strategy, setting out five headline targets of equal importance were adopted to achieve 'smart, inclusive and sustainable growth', was seen as the response to challenges faced by the EU,

General remarks – context

1. Considers that the global crisis should be used as an opportunity to re-found our development model as a model of society based on sustainability, solidarity, the eradication of poverty and the creation of decent green jobs; believes the Europe 2020 Strategy, if adequately implemented and supported and backed by a strong economic governance that fosters a financial system that benefits the real economy, should enable Europe to recover from the crisis by developing the employment potential of the transformation towards a highly efficient, fully renewables-based and climate resilient economy;

2. Stresses that the current euro crisis has to be met with a coordinated and integrated EU response; recalls that while the crisis has set growth back four years, it has done more harm to employment, with the unemployment rate reaching levels not observed since the last 12 years, with more than 23 million people out of work, with more than 5.5 million youth people unemployed at the end of 2010; stresses that diminishing gender inequality is a prerequisite for achieving the EU 2020 headline targets on labour participation and poverty reduction;

3. Expresses its deep concern over the unsustainable level of public and private debt and its predicted rapid increase in years to come, caused by bank bail-outs and the necessary expansionary fiscal policy in response to the crisis, which is an even larger burden bearing in mind that future generations will inherit both a growing ecological and a growing private financial debt; recalls that private debt experienced an unsustainable increase in many Member States during the period preceding the crisis;

Headline Targets and Governance of the 2020 Strategy

4. Reiterates its call for the EU 2020 strategy to shift away from the sole pursuit of GDP growth towards a broader political concept of the future of the EU; believes, as stated by the Commission, that GDP is not meant to be an accurate gauge of longer term economic and social progress and notably the ability of a society to tackle issues such as climate change, resource efficiency or social inclusion; believes additional indicators should complement GDP for the next programme period 2014-2020, GDP could be replaced in the long run by a more comprehensive concept of well-being;

5. Is deeply concerned with the Commission's first Annual Growth Survey (AGS); regrets that the AGS is solely focused on austerity measures and budget cuts; takes the view that these measures alone and the ten additional actions proposed by the Commission are inconsistent with the broad economic policy guidelines and employment guidelines, as well as with the objectives set out in the Europe 2020 Strategy;

6. Expresses its concern that the AGS does not give indications on the way the flagships and the various events supporting their implementation shall be dealt with in the framework of the first European Semester;

7. Regrets the lack of propositions with regards to innovative forms of investments and financing; insists that meeting the objectives set out in the Europe 2020 Strategy calls for new forms of alternative investments; in this regard, urges the Commission to propose a set of measures to help Member States to restore the equilibrium of public accounts and to finance public investment; considers that the EU can successfully recover from the economic, social and environmental crises through alternative forms of investments, namely:

(a) Eurobonds;

(b) Moving away from tax competition between Member States towards tax cooperation including a timetable for the introduction of a common consolidated tax base for corporate profits and a mechanism to ensure a minimum coordination of corporate tax rates on a similar basis to that which is currently in place for VAT;

(c) Coordinated introduction of environmental taxes in order to shift the burden away from labour taxes towards unsustainable activities and products;

(d) EU-wide financial transaction tax;

(e) A progressive bank levy regarding the size of the institution and the level of uninsured short-term funding;

(f) Introducing country-by-country reporting on corporate income and taxes paid thereon, as well as an automatic exchange of information;

(g) Closing down tax havens, starting with those within the EU;

(h) Special crisis taxes on windfall profits of energy corporations and other highly profitable firms;

(i) Projects bonds whose creation has been postponed several times by the Commission;

8. Urges the European Council in accordance with articles 121 and 136 to adopt a set of guidelines in order to develop coordinated and harmonised counter-cyclical fiscal policies as well as further EU solidarity mechanisms aiming at coping with internal imbalances, asymmetric shocks, increase convergence and improve resource allocation efficiency;

9. Stresses that public as well as private indebtedness trigger problems as to the sustainability of our economic, social and ecological model; believes that both should be addressed in an appropriate manner given that a hasty and inappropriate tightening of public finances could stifle the recovery and the increase of employment rate;

10. Believes that preserving financial stability and tackling systemic risk in the EU requires a three step approach consisting of: (i) effective and reinforced supervision and regulation of all players, markets and instruments as well as a strong prevention framework aiming at internalizing negative externalities created by financial markets on the basis of the principle ‘polluter pays’; (ii) comprehensive early intervention mechanisms through a substantial reinforcement of control and intervention powers of European Supervisory Authorities and National supervisors; (iii) a single European framework for cross-border crisis resolution and debt restructuring based on a fair burden sharing mechanisms and requiring that stockholders and creditors contribute to the resolution burden before taxpayers;

11. Agrees with the Commission that ‘Member States with large current account surpluses should identify and tackle the sources of persistently weak domestic demand’; however, is disappointed that it envisions as drivers of domestic demand mainly the further liberalisation of the service sector and the improving conditions for investment since targeted social expenditures pay off in terms of multiplier on the global activity and jobs creation; in this respect, draws the attention on the role of social security as an automatic stabiliser and on services of general interest as an enabler of social inclusion; stresses the need of converging the social standards among its members;

12. Recalls that article 153.5 of the Treaty prohibits the EU to tackle the issue of wage moderation,

including the revision of indexation clauses in bargaining systems;

13. Strongly disagrees with the statement that workers with permanent contracts are over-protected; recalls that since the peak of employment in Autumn 2008, 6.8 million full-time jobs have been cut while, at the same time, 1.1 million part-time jobs and 0.7 million self-employed jobs have been created; emphasises the creation of decent jobs especially through Green jobs;

14. Reiterates its call to achieve gender equality by setting a target of 75% female employment; urges Member States to set ambitious national employment targets for women in jobs that provide economic independence; calls on the Commission and Member States to improve women's access to the labour market through work-life reconciliation policies such as generous leave arrangements, flexible working hours, access to affordable quality childcare and care for other dependents; calls on Member States to take measures to reduce the gender pay gap to 0-5% in 2020, by combating labour market segregation by occupation and sector and by addressing precarious working conditions; calls on the Commission to revise existing legislation on equal pay and to initiate infringement procedures for non-compliant Member States;

15. Recalls that according to Article 9 introduced in the Lisbon Treaty the EU ‘in defining and implementing its policies and activities, (...) shall take into account requirements linked to the promotion of a high level of employment, the guarantee of adequate social protection, the fight against social exclusion, and a high level of education, training and protection of human health’;

16. Reiterates the need to involve the EP and national parliaments at an early stage in the new economic governance framework via the European Semester in order to foster democratic accountability, ownership and legitimacy and to provide room for open debates on the Stability and Growth Pact as well as the macro imbalances and developing better synergies between the EU budget and national budgets;

17. Recalls that the European Council of December 2009 recognised that the Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) will continue to provide a long term vision and constitute the overarching policy framework for all Union policies and strategies; calls for better synergies between the EU 2020 Strategy, the economic governance package, the flagships and the forthcoming revamped SDS;

18. Stresses that more attention should be paid to the external dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy; urges the Commission to have a broader and more comprehensive approach in its external action in line with the EU concept of policy coherence for development; calls on the Commission to use its trade strategy for Europe 2020 also to promote the Union’s core values such as the promotion of human rights, democracy, rule of law and fundamental freedoms and the defence of the environment;

19. Recalls that the Commission should shape its ‘trade strategy for Europe 2020’ in order to transform the EU trade policy into a true vehicle for job creation and sustainable development worldwide and to foresee an open dialogue with the European Parliament and civil society early on the EU priorities for the post-Doha era, in particular social and environmental standards and WTO reform;

Flagship initiatives

Flagship ‘Digital agenda’

20. Calls on the Commission to deliver a stronger policy in the field of ICT, reminds of the key role of standardisation to enable interoperability and to avoid consumers lock-in; reminds in particular of the importance of open standards; deplores that consumers in Europe can access less content and calls therefore for new online business models to be created; draws attention to the need to design the European patent system in a way as to reconcile access with innovation, and to study the economic impact of a

European patent system on SMEs;

Flagship 'Innovation Union'

21. Acknowledges that the Commission initiative aims at giving emphasis and coherence to measures promoting innovation; welcomes the idea of establishing Innovation Partnerships for addressing key societal challenges and streamlining EU programmes in these fields; stresses however that this process will only be successful if effective governance is established, in particular for the setting of concrete objectives;

22. Calls on the Commission to come forward with the Eco-Innovation Action Plan proposing measures and targets to introduce eco-innovation at all steps of the value chain, including design; believes in particular that the setting of benchmarks and standards have proven to be strong drivers for promoting eco-innovation and sustainable competitiveness in several industrial sectors; calls for making greater use of public procurement and pre-commercial procurement potential for driving innovative sustainable solutions on the market; recalls that eco-innovation bears a huge green job potential and calls for an initiative to ensure training for all regarding innovative green skills;

23. Calls for a flexible patent system that contributes to innovation in addressing societal challenges such as demographic change and climate change; reminds that an EU patent system should deliver quality patents, and not simply cheaper ones; calls for a fostering of innovation through patent pools, patents platforms, innovation inducement prizes, full-rights licensing and knowledge clusters, compulsory licences, as well as other IP tools intended to reconcile access with innovation;

Flagship 'Youth on the Move'

24. Welcomes the initiative of the flagship 'Youth on the Move'; calls on Member States to take action with regards to the flagships proposals; believes the Commission must take the lead on its implementation and follow it closely; regrets however, that the flagship leaves core subjects, such as participation in society or youth poverty, unaddressed; calls for stronger proposals on inclusion;

25. Underlines that Youth on the Move will not alone tackle the alarming youth unemployment all over Europe; calls for all Member States to set up a national strategy to tackle youth unemployment and secure young people access to education and training; underlines that youth policies must be seen in relation with policies on education, employment, social inclusion and macroeconomics; points out that austerity measures with i.e. cuts in the educational system and job creation, will not help young people; strongly supports the proposal for a Council Recommendation on a European Youth Guarantee and urges the Council to adopt it as soon as possible;

Flagship 'Platform against Poverty'

25. Generally welcomes the initiative but regrets the lack of a clear strategy, specific proposals and governance of how to reach the poverty and employment targets of the EU 2020 strategy, particularly in

the context of the crisis and governments' austerity cuts; reiterates its call for a broader agenda to promote decent work, ensure workers rights throughout Europe and improve working conditions, tackle inequality and discrimination, combat in-work poverty; calls on the Commission to set out more concrete actions to implement social rights, such as a roadmap to implement the Active Inclusion strategy and an Adequate Minimum Income Guarantee at least above the poverty threshold by 2020;

Flagship 'An agenda for new skills and jobs'

26. States that not increased deregulation will save jobs on European labour markets, but ecological innovation and improved resource- and energy-efficiency; regrets that the new skills for new jobs flagship does not tackle the questions of a sustainable transformation of the labour market in order to create new jobs and safe endangered jobs; regrets that it also neglects the question ensuring a socially just transition to a more sustainable labour market and the potential the huge potential of green jobs by investing in training and lifelong learning, but instead only reiterates the flexicurity approach;

Flagship 'Resource-efficient Europe'

27. Regrets that this flagship communication fails to set out any targets to put resource efficiency as an overarching EU policy priority; stresses the urgent need to mainstream resource efficiency across policy fields, such as agriculture, transport and energy; insists the EU needs to start moving towards a recycling economy with real pricing that reflects true environmental costs and ensures a reduction in waste production, and the value of reusing resources; stresses that environmental sustainability depends on an absolute reduction in resource use; is disappointed the flagship does not mention Europe's ecological footprint, as this is a clear indicator of our unsustainable use of resources; calls on the Commission to come up with a set of indicators to this effect so that they can be monitored in the next Annual Growth Survey;

28. Stresses the need for Cohesion Policy to help put the EU economy on the path to sustainable and job-creating development and to shift investment to support to and tackle climate, energy and environmental issues;

29. Welcomes that the Commission sets out how national, regional and local authorities can realign current Regional Policy programmes to EU 2020 sustainable development objectives and facilitate the development of a highly efficient, fully renewables-based, climate resilient and competitive economy; calls on Member States to act without delay, invest more in sustainable development and use funds more effectively;

Flagship 'Industrial policy for a globalised era'

30. Acknowledges the proposal for Integrated Industrial policy proposed by the Commission and notices its focus on restoring EU's industry competitiveness; stresses, in this respect, that, in the face of the global challenges and the reality of resources scarcity and depletion, it is essential that energy and resources efficiency and the development of close loop industrial production systems are at the basis of the European industrial renewal;

31. Calls on the Commission to set up a permanent industrial policy task force to regularly evaluate the progresses of EU's industrial policy initiatives, assess jobs creation potential and sustainability in key European industry sectors, promote coherence within its different elements and identify further problems to be addressed;

32. Call on the Commission to secure sustainability proofing of the sector specific approaches in line with EU's climate and energy policy objective, and with the setting of ambitious resource efficiency objectives, targets and instruments to enhance EU's resource productivity and improve durability, reuse, recycling and remanufacturing;

33. Agrees that the new integrated industrial policy must cover the design, production and composition of products and services along the whole chain of processes and added value, and must include a smart mix of measure for the supply side as well as for the demand side which may be different from sector to sector, including for instance regulatory stimulus, a revamped standardisation policy, labelling, public procurement, vat reduction, tax incentives;

34. Looks forward to the implementation of the closer cooperation with Member States and the monitoring of industrial policies at the European and Member State level under the new Lisbon Treaty's TFEU Article 173 on industrial policy and in the context of the EU 2020 Strategy, the economic governance and the European semester;

35. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the European Council and the Commission.

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