

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

Session document

4.3.2009

B6-0108/2009

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on statements by the Council and Commission
pursuant to Rule 103(2) of the Rules of Procedure

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on the input to the Spring 2009 European Council in relation to the Lisbon
Strategy

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European Parliament resolution on the input to the Spring 2009 European Council in relation to the Lisbon Strategy

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 July 2005 entitled 'Common actions for growth and employment: the Community Lisbon Programme' (COM(2005)0330),
- having regard to the implementation of the Commission's Community Lisbon Programme 2008-2010 (COM(2008)0881),
- having regard to the Commission's communication on the external dimension of the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs (COM(2008)0874),
- having regard to the Commission's communication on the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy Structural Reforms in the context of the European Recovery Plan (COM(2009)0034),
- having regard to the 27 National Lisbon Reform Programmes as presented by the Member States,
- having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

The consequences of neoliberalism: worsening of social and economic conditions

1. Stresses that the EU has suffered an increase in poverty, precarious work and inequalities, a situation that could worsen, given that the latest forecasts show a trend towards recession and an increase of about 3½ million people unemployed in 2009;
2. Recalls that the increase in poverty, precarious work and inequalities is prior to the deepening of the economic and financial crisis; rejects, therefore, any attempts to use the current economic crisis as the justification for the current social and economic conditions;
3. Underlines that this crisis shows not only the failure of right-wing policies, the prevailing neo-liberal fundamentalism and the related political programme, and its incapacity to address the problems of workers and peoples, but also strikes a hard blow at the triumphant capitalism myth;
4. Denounces and rejects the EU attempts to mystify the real causes of the crisis and acquit not only the capitalist system itself, but also its own responsibilities; stresses, in this respect, the continued policies to promote financial deregulation, liberalise markets and privatise public services, liberalise world trade, deregulate labour relations and undermine workers' rights embodied in the Lisbon Strategy and in the European

Employment Strategy, policies that promote the accumulation of colossal profits by the big economic and financial groups, the formation of large monopolies and the deterioration of the living standards of workers and peoples;

5. Stresses that the current crisis of capitalism carries serious risks of worsening economic and social problems, which cannot and must not be underestimated;
6. Notes that the latest developments in the national and international situation show that, despite millions of euros and dollars having been made available to save the financial system, the crisis continues and, on the horizon, there remain grim prospects of widespread economic recession; points out that the reality is showing that measures to recapitalise the financial system are not enough and that urgent measures must be implemented to combat the causes that lie at the root of the crisis, which is not only a financial crisis;
7. Points out that the measures that came out of the December Council are far from providing an appropriate response to the causes at the root of the current crises; recalls that the so-called European Economic Recovery Plan is to be financed mainly by each Member State, which illustrates what is meant by so-called 'European solidarity';
8. Deplores, furthermore, the Council's and Commission's positions - in tune with Business Europe - consisting in using the current situation to push even further the same policies, enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty, that fed speculation and increased exploitation and that are at the origin of the extraordinary scale of this crisis; points out that the supporters of such policies are now working to ensure that, in essence, everything remains the same;
9. Finds it unacceptable that, under the pretext of the forthcoming crisis, workers, small business persons, farmers, pensioners, young people and women are, as always, expected to make heavy sacrifices; considers that to continue in this way is to add to the crisis;

For a Europe of employment with rights and for the improvement of the workers' and peoples' living conditions

10. Reaffirms its commitment to a Europe of cooperation, social progress and equality, that promotes the environment and respects democracy, solidarity and peace;
11. Calls for respect to be shown for the democratic and sovereignly-expressed will of the peoples of France, the Netherlands and Ireland, who rejected a more neoliberal and militarist EU by saying 'NO' to the 'European Constitution' and to the Lisbon Treaty;
12. Calls for the urgent abandoning of the Lisbon Strategy and its neo-liberal agenda as a first step towards the necessary break with current policies;
13. Underlines that tackling the problems and needs of workers and peoples should not involve more regulation or reformulation of the capitalist system but a reversal of macro-economic policies and the defence of employment and workers' rights;

14. Calls on Member States to defend their productive sectors and employment; draws attention to the continuous reports of job losses in the EU, which require an urgent and adequate response;
15. Reaffirms the need for an alternative policy aimed at improving the living conditions of workers and the population, ensuring a fair distribution of income, stimulating economic activity, creating job, strengthening the role of the state in the economy, boosting demand, stimulating the growth of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, strengthening investment, while taking into account the needs and particularities of each Member State;
16. Calls on the Spring Council to immediately adopt a ‘European Strategy for Solidarity and Sustainable Development’ based on the abovementioned principles, with a new set of economic, social and environmental policies to encourage investment in:
 - (i) the quality of work in all its aspects (wages, stability, working conditions and training) and improving qualifications, in order to achieve a highly trained and skilled workforce,
 - (ii) basic and industry-supportive infrastructure,
 - (iii) public services, in order to improve their quality,
 - (iv) a strong cohesion policy, in order to promote social and economic cohesion,
 - (v) in the protection of the environment and in eco-technologies,
 - (vi) improving labour, social, environmental and safety standards, in order to achieve harmonisation to meet the highest standards,
 - (vii) the social economy,
 - (viii) social protection, in order to eradicate poverty and fight against social exclusion,
 - (ix) (public-sector) research and innovation, in order to guarantee its benefits to all,
 - (x) the promotion of culture, sports and civil participation, and
 - (xi) ending the financialisation of the economy;
17. Considers that the Stability and Growth Pact must be revoked in parallel with the establishment of an Employment and Growth Pact which will foster public investment, improve efficiency, and set specific economic, social and environmental criteria tailored to the particular needs of each Member State, in particular targeting unemployment reduction;
18. Calls on the Commission and the Council to go further in this direction by drawing up a ‘European Investment Programme for Sustainable Development, Employment and Social Inclusion’ of at least 1 % of EU GDP, which should be complemented by the establishment of similar public investment programmes by the Member States in order to stabilise the economy, counter climate change and promote full employment with high-quality jobs and social rights;
19. Underlines the need for effective measures to guarantee respect for and the reinforcement of workers' rights, ensure decent incomes for workers, in particular women, guarantee the rights to safety and health at work, social protection and trade union freedom, and promote the abolition of all forms of discrimination between men and women at work;

20. Insists on the need for urgent measures to promote an increase in purchasing power in order to stimulate demand and promote economic activities in global terms,
21. Calls on Member States to adopt policies for the recovery of wages and pensions, reversing the systematic transfer of productivity gains to employers, which will contribute to greater justice in the distribution of wealth, improved living standards for workers and pensioners and economic recovery;
22. Draws particular attention to workers affected by unemployment who require further and immediate measures, e.g. by extending the criteria for awarding unemployment benefit and its duration; finds unacceptable the use of the crisis as an excuse for employers to dismiss thousands of workers;
23. Emphasises that there is no response to the crisis and its consequences without the enhancement of public welfare: asks Member States to strengthen the social functions of the state and social protection systems, strengthen public investment in equipment, particularly in nurseries and elderly homes, develop a housing policy that guarantees the right of everyone to housing, protect and develop a public health service and enhance state schooling;
24. Stresses the importance of reinforcing public systems of social security, which is also dependent on improving wages; points out that pension funds, especially occupational pension funds, must not be allowed to invest in financial products such as hedge funds and private equity that entail systemic risks, because the failure of such funds would adversely affect pension entitlements;
25. Calls on the Council also to set an ambitious objective to reduce the number in poverty and eradicate the ‘working poor’; stresses that this requires a combination of better wages and access to free, quality and universal public services;
26. Reaffirms its opposition to the draft directive on working time and calls for the withdrawal of this proposal; calls on the Council, furthermore, to make a strong commitment to working-time reduction without lowering wages, and calls on Member States to coordinate efforts to gradually reduce working time in order to achieve the short-term objective of a 35-hour week;
27. Calls on Member States to abandon the flexicurity approach and adopt measures to combat precariousness, such as ensuring that precarious forms of employment are not adopted when the work to be carried out is permanent;

For a Europe of economic, social and environmental progress

28. Urges Member States to strengthen their role and intervention in strategic areas and sectors of the economy, particularly in energy, communications and transport, and to take up a dominant and strong position in the financial sector;
29. Highlights the importance of public services for the promotion of social, economic and territorial cohesion in the EU; stresses that public structural sectors should not be open

to competition but, rather, should be owned and managed by public authorities, as the only way to ensure the quality, availability and affordability of the service provided and thus to guarantee users' rights;

30. Stresses that the Community budget should be used in such a way as to give priority to policies of real convergence, based on social progress, and the safeguarding and promotion of each country's potential, the sustained use of natural resources and protection of the environment, with the goal of true economic and social cohesion;
31. Proposes the reorientation of the objectives of the structural and cohesion funds to effectively reduce regional disparities, promote economic and social cohesion and real convergence, and abandon the continuous 'Lisbonisation';
32. Calls on the Spring Council to examine the unspent commitments under Headings 1 and 2 and adopt measures to ensure the full implementation of the structural and cohesion funds; asks, in this respect, for an increase in the level of Community funding and for the abandonment of the n+2 and n+3 rule in these funds;
33. Suggests the adoption of specific measures for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, such as reduced energy, communications and toll costs; acknowledges that measures to facilitate access to credit are important, but considers that very little will change, especially for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, unless purchasing power and consumer demand improve;
34. Calls for a new policy of industrial investment that takes advantage of the natural resources and productive capacity of each Member State;
35. Insists on the defence of the productive sectors, starting with an immediate prospective assessment of the sectors most vulnerable to the crisis; calls for a new Community programme to support and develop the productive sectors in each Member State and thus to contribute to employment creation and to revitalise the economy;
36. Calls for a profound reform of the common policies for agriculture and fisheries, ensuring the food security and sovereignty of each country, promoting public projects and supporting micro, small and medium-sized companies, cooperatives and local authorities, concentrating Community funds in this direction and correcting regional asymmetries;
37. Reiterates its request for the creation of a regulatory framework at EU level to penalise relocations of firms inside and outside the EU, and for measures to stop the relocation of companies, namely by making Community assistance conditional on the fulfilment of obligations, such as job protection and local development, and to prevent multinational corporations from continuing to act with total impunity;
38. Urges the Commission to propose measures making imported products/goods placed on the internal market subject to the same requirements as those produced in the various Member States;

39. Calls for the systematic supervision and inspection of imported goods and for the adoption of safeguard measures when necessary;
40. Urges the Commission to draw up a new international trading policy to enable job-creating industries and economic activities to survive and develop, improve working conditions, safeguard, and build upon, social rights, and effectively protect the environment;
41. Considers that the latest failure of the WTO trade negotiations indicates that the European Union must review its policy on international trade negotiations, and urges it to bring forward new proposals for future multilateral trade negotiations with a view to adopting regulatory and stabilising mechanisms for a fair international trading system, aimed at tackling global problems such as poverty, lack of development and food sovereignty, soaring food prices, epidemics, joblessness and relocations, destruction of the environment and climate change;
42. Agrees that the Member States and the EU must make bold efforts to end their dependency on fossil fuels and reverse the current unsustainable trend; stresses that ecological and social sustainability must be at the heart of EU and Member State public investment programmes; notes that investments should be geared towards promoting renewable energies, decoupling economic growth from energy growth, improving energy efficiency and promoting energy savings, accompanied by development and social progress;
43. Encourages Member States to explore and adopt further measures to support the final user and thus stimulate the use of greener energies and energy efficiency in different fields such as housing, equipment, or car fleets, through Community support whenever necessary;
44. Calls for greater support for investment that promotes a reduction in waste, the re-use and recycling of materials, and the reduction and treatment of hazardous industrial and toxic waste;
45. Stresses that the Statutes of the ECB should be reviewed to ensure that political control of the ECB is in the hands of the Member States, and that its monetary policy and guidelines should be reviewed in favour of strong economic growth and employment;
46. Welcomes the recent interest rate cuts by the ECB, and calls on the ECB to further relax its monetary policy in order to counter the forthcoming economic downturn; criticises the fact that the interest rate cuts came too late to have greater positive effects;
47. Points out that the EIB and the EBRD must be provided with the resources needed to drastically increase their credit lines at very low interest rates for SMEs, local authorities and public projects, ecological production and services, social and health services etc., on condition that these create high-quality employment with social rights and decent pay and working conditions;

48. Urges Member States to develop measures to counter the growing indebtedness of families and help families and small businesses to cope with house and business loans, including through the administrative fixing of margins (spread), commissions, interest rates and credit access conditions;
49. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to adopt measures to abolish tax havens/offshore financial centres, to introduce taxes on currency transactions (Tobin Tax) and stock exchange transactions (including over-the-counter transactions) and to tax large economic and financial groups more strongly; asks the Council, the Commission and the Member States to make a firm commitment to abolishing tax havens and offshore activities worldwide;
50. Proposes the development of a new international order, within the UN framework, to defend fairer and more equitable economic relations, guarantee access to food, water and energy and the preservation of these resources, improve living conditions, and combat hunger, poverty and disease; stresses also the need to ensure respect for sovereignty, the strengthening of peace and cooperation among nations, the democratisation of the UN and respect for the UN Charter;
51. Points out that, although a revision of the international monetary and financial system and action to combat the dollar's privileges are necessary, this cannot be done through the artificial recovery of the euro, at the expense of The EU's weaker economies;
52. Agrees that the financial system needs to be stabilised, but considers that this requires clear rules and commitments and a fair remuneration of public funds, as well as the proper punishment of those responsible for fraudulent practices and speculation;
53. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the national parliaments.