



Plenary sitting

B9-0115/2023

8.2.2023

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on an EU strategy to boost industrial competitiveness, trade and quality jobs
(2023/2513(RSP))

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on behalf of the ID Group

B9-0115/2023

European Parliament resolution on an EU strategy to boost industrial competitiveness, trade and quality jobs (2023/2513(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 173 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
 - having regard to Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union,
 - having regard to Article 207 TFEU,
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 10 March 2020 entitled ‘A New Industrial Strategy for Europe’ (COM(2020)0102),
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 5 May 2021 entitled ‘Updating the 2020 New Industrial Strategy: Building a stronger Single Market for Europe’s recovery’ (COM(2021)0350),
 - having regard to the statements by the Council and the Commission of 18 January 2023 on an EU strategy to boost industrial competitiveness, trade and quality jobs,
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 1 February 2023 entitled ‘A Green Deal Industrial Plan for the Net-Zero Age’ (COM(2023)0062),
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the United States has adopted the Inflation Reduction Act, signed into law on 16 August 2022, aimed at stimulating investment in domestic manufacturing capacity, encouraging the procurement of critical supplies domestically or from free-trade partners and jump-starting research and development and the commercialisation of leading-edge technologies such as carbon capture and storage and clean hydrogen; whereas the extensive package of public subsidies devised by the US Government threatens to divert investment by companies in Europe overseas;
- B. whereas the Commission proposed a net-zero industry act to compete with increased US spending on subsidies and in response to concerns raised on this matter in the EU capital; whereas the proposal set out clean tech objectives for 2030; whereas without a new boost in funds from the public sector, businesses will suffer from the negative consequences of the new legislation;
- C. whereas the phenomenon of reshoring European industries has been fuelled, inter alia, by fiscal and environmental over-regulation, as well as by the adoption of trade agreements that have damaged domestic manufacturing without taking into account the real needs of European industry;
- D. whereas high energy prices are creating an uncompetitive landscape for European industry; whereas there is a need for a revision of State aid rules and competition

policies;

- E. whereas reindustrialisation and reshoring within the Union and the Member States should be the priority for supportive measures; whereas relocation policies should focus on essential and strategic sectors that will contribute to the economic sovereignty of the Member States, in particular in the face of geopolitical, financial, social, health and environmental crises;
- F. whereas 99 % of EU businesses are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), representing around 50 % of the EU's gross domestic product and employing more than 100 million workers; whereas women and people with disabilities still remain under-represented across industrial sectors, occupations and management levels;

A few basic and clear rules for a technologically neutral approach

1. Underlines the failure of the industrial policies pursued by the European Union during the last decades; stresses that the European Green Deal, initially advertised as a package of environmental measures, turned out to be a textbook example of centralised industrial planning, imposing an immediate high-cost transition on European companies;
2. Highlights that the Net-Zero Industry Act is not the appropriate response to the difficulties our industries are experiencing due to the health and geopolitical crises; underlines that issuing a guiding act for industrial policy exclusively focused on achieving net-zero climate targets by 2050 is not what European industry expected;
3. Stresses the need for a comprehensive revival of European industry in order to avoid any discrimination against traditional productive sectors and any exclusion of industrial sectors which could disappear in the absence of a real strategy; insists that the Commission should strive for dynamism in those industries and not only focus on regulatory sandboxes to test disruptive new technologies, but also enable innovation in existing, mature and widely available processes and technologies;
4. Warns that the measures on the supply of raw materials are lagging far behind the Green Deal and the Fit for 55 packages that promote technologies and energy sources based on non-existent value chains in Europe; highlights that an industrial strategy must aim to accelerate innovation, particularly in the key areas of digitalisation and production, and embrace strategies that promote the recovery of quality employment and manufacturing opportunities in order to increase global competitiveness and avoid excessive dependency on foreign providers, particularly in strategic sectors such as energy, semiconductors, pharmaceutical and medical devices, cyber and data security, digitalisation and agriculture;
5. Highlights that authorities should envisage a regulatory integrated approach and apply a technologically neutral approach; calls on the Commission and the Members States to build clear and simple regulatory conditions to guide investors and grant the necessary legal certainty to protect long-term investments;
6. Believes that it is essential to support models of virtuous collaboration between the different players involved in research, development and commercialisation supported by public authorities, companies, universities, very small, small and medium-sized

enterprises, start-ups, trade unions, end-user organisations and all relevant actors working together to foster innovation, including in areas not yet covered by industrial interests;

Financing the new industrial strategy

7. Notes that the new funds made available to finance REPowerEU chapters are also intended to improve the oil infrastructure and facilities needed to meet the immediate security of supply needs of a Member State covered by the exceptional temporary derogation on account of its specific dependence on oil and its geographical situation, but regrets that REPowerEU did not include the possibility, for those Member States wishing to do so and as provided for in Article 194 TFEU, of maintaining, increasing and renewing energy infrastructure and facilities, including new low-carbon power plants;
8. Welcomes the willingness to simplify the InvestEU framework, but considers that the strict green conditions placed on receiving funding are unrealistic and a disincentive for many industries; regrets that out of a total of EUR 21 billion in InvestEU guarantee agreements, loans to SMEs only total EUR 2.3 billion;

Relocation strategies and trade defence instruments

9. Calls on the Commission to adopt measures to incentivise Member States to relocate manufacturing activities to the EU;
10. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to equip themselves with effective trade defence instruments and to closely monitor the effectiveness of the recent foreign direct investment screening instrument in order to improve their capacity to prevent hostile takeovers by non-EU companies that could threaten the labour markets, while remaining strongly committed to the commercial partners of our industries;

Supporting SMEs and investing in skills to boost quality jobs

11. Underlines the importance of a sustainable strategy that does not jeopardise the global competitiveness of industry and SMEs and does not put their workers in danger; stresses that SMEs have to deal with too much red tape and that the European Green Deal and the Fit for 55 package represent a disproportionate additional financial burden overall in the light of the current energy crisis;
12. Highlights the need to create a supportive environment for SMEs that enables them to develop and grow, for example, by reducing the regulatory burden, facilitating access to finance and supporting entrepreneurship, which are critical for innovation and job creation; calls on the Member States to enhance the exchange of information and good practices in order to achieve a positive impact on working conditions and workers' rights and to avoid wage and social dumping;
13. Takes note of the European Year of Skills 2023; points out that this initiative should enhance continuous learning, employability and career progression and promote a mindset of reskilling and upskilling, thereby boosting the competitiveness of European companies, in particular SMEs;

14. Stresses the need to close skills gaps and mismatches and to promote the creation of quality jobs and retention strategies as the best way to attract and retain a skilled workforce;
15. Underlines the importance of developing local strategies and local pacts for skills by closely cooperating with social partners and public and private employment services, including local authorities, companies, education and training providers;
16. Believes that there should be a special focus on activating more people for the labour market, in particular those not in education, employment or training (NEETs);
17. Underlines the importance of the recognition of skills and competences, in particular from informal and non-formal education, especially soft crosscutting skills such as language skills, entrepreneurship and media literacy;
18. Calls on the Member States to encourage women's participation in digital entrepreneurship, education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and information and communications technology, and in employment in order to avoid an industrial and digital gender gap;
19. Calls on the Member States to address and promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in industrial sectors and workplaces, and in society as a whole, by tackling discrimination, fostering solidarity and ensuring accessibility by removing physical, digital, educational and social barriers and building on digital assistive technologies;
20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.