



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on Regional Development

2013/2006(INI)

12.7.2013

OPINION

of the Committee on Regional Development

for the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

on reindustrialising Europe to promote competitiveness and sustainability
(2013/2006(INI))

Rapporteur: María Irigoyen Pérez

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Regional Development calls on the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Stresses that even though the industrial sector has suffered greatly from the consequences of the current economic crisis, it remains unquestionably one of EU's main assets at international level and a key driver for achieving EU 2020 objectives for growth, jobs, innovation, research, development, sustainability and competitiveness; points out that overall industrial production now is 10 % lower than it was before the crisis and that more than 3 million industrial jobs have been lost; notes, however, that there is a risk of growing shortages of workers with skills specifically tailored to the needs of sustainable development;
2. Is concerned at the massive deindustrialisation affecting many of Europe's traditional industrial heartlands; takes the view that former industrialised regions can make a significant contribution to reindustrialisation; points out in this connection that public attention has shifted away from former industrialised regions and, given the particular challenges, sufficient investment possibilities need to be made available for specific regional development strategies; supports, in this context, 're-shoring' initiatives seeking the reentry of production and services from third countries;
3. Expresses strong concern about the consequences of the financial and economic downturn, falling investment and growing inequalities in the EU, especially among its regions as regards productivity, competitiveness and prosperity; points out that it is vital to take strong policy measures and allocate adequate financial resources to support a renaissance of industry for a sustainable Europe, based, inter alia, on cultural and creative industries and new technologies such as nanotechnologies, biotechnologies and microelectronics; maintains that, failing such an action, the sharp decline in industrial production will have a serious negative impact not only on the EU's output, but also on social and territorial cohesion, and that the 'technology gap' between the EU and other high-tech hubs, i.e. the United States and the BRIC countries, will grow dangerously wider;
4. Emphasises that the future cohesion policy will be one of the main EU policies fostering industrial innovation through smart specialisation in order to respond to the challenges associated with sustainable energy, climate change and the efficient use of both material and human resources; takes the view, therefore, that support from the future cohesion policy and the European Structural and Investment Funds is pivotal to the reindustrialisation of the EU and its regions through a genuinely modern industrial policy which has to be inclusive, sustainable, energy-efficient and highly competitive; calls for better coordination and synergies between cohesion policy and Horizon 2020 programmes in order to set up regional innovation incubators and to maximise innovation at regional level;
5. Underlines that regions' characteristics and their specific strengths have to be taken into consideration when planning regional industrial development strategies for each region

and each sector in order to achieve a high level of specialisation in Europe's industry;

6. Points out that, in border areas, the industrial challenges are often the same on both sides of the border, owing to the common territorial features which these areas share; calls on the Commission, the Member States and local and regional authorities to draw up cross-border industrial conversion strategies, aimed at creating cross-border clusters, and joint training and employment strategies on a scale appropriate to cross-border population centres;
7. Stresses the need to set out clear industrial competitiveness policy strategies at EU level as well as within the National Reform Programmes, through a more focused territorial and strategic approach, which includes the setting of priorities in relation to: facilitating access to finance and micro-credit facilities, support for R&D, education, vocational training and life-long learning, administrative simplification and capacity-building to allow businesses to operate at lowest cost possible, clear environmental regulations, the reduction of labour taxation, greater flexibility on the labour market, improvement of environmentally-friendly infrastructure, greater involvement and coordination of local and regional authorities as well as of public and private stakeholders and strong support for SMEs, entrepreneurs and social businesses; believes that a more coordinated approach between different levels of government and stakeholders will be achieved by including the proposed territorial pacts and instruments in the partnership agreements to bring these actors together in order to focus and coordinate their actions and financial resources on the Europe 2020 Strategy goals and targets;
8. Considers that the reindustrialisation of Europe must be accompanied by efforts to generate employment for young people, for which purpose it is necessary to ensure that Community employment strategies are tailored to the future needs of European industry, to launch regional and national programmes to provide young people with a high-quality technological education and foster entrepreneurship among young people through access to European funds and business advice;
9. Recalls that regional economies are a key to achieving smart, sustainable and inclusive growth as they have both the required knowledge and capacity to mobilise local stakeholders in accordance with the regional specificities; reiterates the crucial importance of connecting the innovation and sustainability agendas at the regional, national and European level by developing strong regional and national research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation (RIS3);
10. Is of the opinion that, in order for the European Structural and Investment Funds to deliver more targeted support as part of a strategic, integrated approach, the delivery of RIS3 strategies should be maintained as a form of ex ante conditionality for funding under the R&D&I objective of the future cohesion policy; points out that such RIS3 strategies, based on the comparative advantages of regions, will promote productivity-enhancing measures, attract public and private capital thanks to a high leverage effect and help regions to concentrate their resources on a few key priorities in order to make more effective use of available funds;
11. Underlines that national and regional authorities have to place economic, social and environmental innovation at the heart of their long-term sustainable development

strategies, driven by strong networks, knowledge exchange and management and innovation ecosystems, composed by clusters of highly specialised SMEs and industries; supports the growth of industrial parks through cooperation between national and local authorities, economic operators and research and development organisations;

12. Agrees with the Commission and the Council that competitiveness gains in the internal market but also in trade with third countries should be an absolute priority; calls on the Member States and Commission to support industries, and SMEs in particular, to export and internationalise; underlines the need for, and the importance of, the drawing-up of European standards that are widely applied and defended by the EU in the global market, especially regarding environmental and social responsibility, so that innovative measures implemented by European enterprises do not penalise them but instead gradually become a global standard, not least by virtue of the reciprocity principle;
13. Is strongly concerned by the negative impact of the economic and financial crisis on the capacity of EU regions to finance productive investment for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, thus putting at high risk the achievement of the Europe 2020 objectives;
14. Calls on the Commission to propose minimum ecological and social taxation on imports from third countries in order to meet the European social and environmental standards which EU industries have to observe;
15. Is of the opinion that, together with grants, there is a need for loans, venture capital, guarantees and other forms of financial engineering instruments to play a stronger role in the competitiveness of EU industry; calls for the proper use of financial instruments through combining and synergies of the various forms of financial support, both direct and indirect, especially those available to SMEs and social businesses, in order to offer more tailor-made access to finance; maintains that individual EU policies and the various sources of funding for European reindustrialisation needs to be coordinated more closely, according to the rules of the Cohesion policy legislative package 2014-2020;
16. Considers that, given the current financial, economic and social crisis, public and private investment is essential as part of an overall strategy for sustainable growth; supports, in this connection, the overall reform on state aid regime, through the application of a more socially and economically based approach and through a greater flexibility of competition rules as laid down in Articles 101 and 102 of TFEU; reiterates the importance of taking greater account of the quality and the efficiency of public spending;

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	10.7.2013
Result of final vote	+: 42 -: 0 0: 3
Members present for the final vote	François Alfonsi, Luís Paulo Alves, Catherine Bearder, Victor Boştinaru, John Bufton, Nikos Chrysogelos, Francesco De Angelis, Tamás Deutsch, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Danuta Maria Hübner, Filiz Hakaeva Hyusmenova, Vincenzo Iovine, María Irigoyen Pérez, Seán Kelly, Mojca Kleva Kekuš, Constanze Angela Krehl, Jacek Olgierd Kurski, Petru Constantin Luhan, Ramona Nicole Mănescu, Vladimír Maňka, Iosif Matula, Erminia Mazzoni, Miroslav Mikolášik, Jens Nilsson, Jan Olbrycht, Wojciech Michał Olejniczak, Younous Omarjee, Markus Pieper, Monika Smolková, Georgios Stavrakakis, Nuno Teixeira, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Oldřich Vlasák, Kerstin Westphal, Hermann Winkler, Joachim Zeller, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Andrea Cozzolino, Karima Delli, Cornelia Ernst, Ivars Godmanis, James Nicholson, Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid, Elisabeth Schroedter, Evžen Tošenovský