

# Resolution on the Commission legislative and work programme for 2008

2007/2576(RSP) - 12/12/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the Commission legislative and work programme for 2008, welcoming the focused structure of the Commission's work programme and the Commission's effort to continue improving its political content. It requested the inclusion in the future of an indicative timetable of Commission initiatives. It supported the crucial importance accorded in the work programme to growth and jobs, sustainable development, climate change, energy and migration, and the emphasis on better regulation, correct implementation and reinforcing the role of Europe as a world partner. The Commission was asked, nevertheless, to be more ambitious in its initiatives aimed at securing fundamental rights, freedom, justice and social inclusion.

**Growth and jobs:** Parliament called on the Commission to step up efforts to extend and deepen the internal market. It asked also for particular emphasis on the coherent implementation of the Services Directive, and the effective implementation of Points of Single Contact so as to promote access to the single market. It went on to call for the following, inter alia :

- improving market surveillance, in particular in order to establish strong credibility for CE marking and to tackle counterfeiting;
- clarifying the legislative grey area in fields such as on-line auctions;
- examining very carefully and in close cooperation with the Member States, the business community and consumers possible ways to enhance the quick, efficient and fair resolution of conflicts between businesses and consumers, as easier access to court is vital for the protection of consumers in a globalised environment. However, this process should not lead to the creation of new barriers to free movement in the internal market;
- in the framework of the Social Reality Stocktaking, identifying initiatives for economic and social governance;
- an adequate level of protection of intellectual property rights;
- proposals which could effectively improve European prudential supervision, including that of hedge funds and rating agencies. Parliament wanted the Commission to conduct a thorough analysis of the origins and consequences of the **sub-prime mortgage crisis** in the United States, including a risk assessment for European markets, and an evaluation of the current systems and instruments of prudential supervision in Europe. There must be 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.

Parliament urged the Commission not to sacrifice the **social dimension of the Lisbon strategy** by considering that it is a handicap to competitiveness, but requested the Commission to respect the balance between its different pillars. Proper investment in knowledge created a more prosperous economy which could fight problems such as poverty, social exclusion and unemployment and ensure the better protection of workers.

Parliament regretted the following :

- that the Commission did not intend to proceed with a legislative proposal regarding the Fourteenth Company Law Directive (transfer of the registered office), while stressing that this long-awaited directive would fill a gap in the internal market for the benefit of undertakings;

- that the Commission was not intending to come forward with an initiative regarding the creation of a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base.

**Sustainable Europe:** whilst welcoming the Commission's ambitious proposals on climate change, Parliament asked the Commission to enhance the synergies between employment and industrial development on the one hand and development and the use of clean technologies on the other.

It called on the Commission for the following :

- a comprehensive legislative framework for the promotion and the use of renewable energy in the EU, including binding targets ;

- to take the Energy Efficiency Action Plan and Biomass Action Plan fully into account, helping the EU to meet renewable energy and energy efficiency objectives;

- on public health, to contribute to the reinforcement of patient safety, patient information, patients' rights and to tackle the determinants of rare diseases;

- to intensify its efforts to work out a coherent policy with regard to emergencies in the health sector, people with disabilities or chronic illnesses and information to patients. Particular attention should be paid to the pandemic-preparedness issue;

- on fisheries, to define specific proposals on the implications and the detailed rules of the MSY model (Maximum Sustainable Yield), to propose concrete legislative proposals on the eco-labelling scheme and to put forward a proposal for simplification of Council Regulation (EC) No 850/98 for the conservation of fishery resources through technical measures for the protection of juveniles of marine organisms;

- to present an EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region during 2008.

**An integrated approach to migration:** a common migration, visa and asylum policy and effective economic, social and political integration of immigrants on the basis of common principles are two sides of the same coin and represent key challenges.

Parliament asked for the following from the Commission ;

- to strengthen measures for tackling human trafficking and illegal immigration, and to examine the implementation of the Council's 2005 Action Plan in this area;

- to improve education and integration policies in order to establish a clear and safe framework for economic immigrants, notably skilled workers, which clarifies their rights and obligations;

- to involve Parliament and national parliaments very closely to ensure the smooth functioning of the Schengen system and the integrity of the EU's external borders;

- greater operational cooperation at European level in the fight against terrorism and greater involvement, where appropriate, of Parliament. It was emphasised that effective and enforceable data protection instruments were not to be seen as obstacles in the fight against terrorism or any sort of radicalisation, but as indispensable confidence-boosting mechanisms in the exchange of information between law enforcement agencies.

**Putting citizens first:** Parliament stressed the importance of cultural diversity and of dialogue between cultures in an enlarged Union. It noted that the Commission's priorities for 2008 highlighted the potential contribution of lifelong learning to raising employment rates, but regretted that this was not reflected in a single concrete proposal. It went on to suggest the creation of a European force that could immediately react in emergencies, as proposed in the Barnier report, and asked the Commission to formulate a concrete proposal to this end.

**Europe as a world partner:** Parliament welcomed the fact that the Commission's work programme stressed the need to continue the enlargement process, and regarded the Western Balkans as a priority area. It expected further evaluations and proposals on EU assistance to Kosovo as the situation evolved. Members called on the Commission to develop further specific proposals, including an action plan with specific objectives and benchmarks to enhance cooperation between the EU and the countries of the Black Sea region. In addition, they wanted further steps towards a common external energy policy in order to ensure access to sustainable energy for all Member States. The Commission was asked to take a clear approach in the dialogue with Russia. Parliament moved on to emphasise the need for a successful conclusion to the Doha Round, and underlined that the EU also needed to reinforce its engagement with emerging economies through bilateral or regional free trade agreements seen as complementary to the multilateral approach. Provisions on the implementation of core labour standards should be included. A comprehensive new strategy on China was important, as was stronger protection for intellectual property rights.

**Horizontal issues:** Members felt that it was a key priority to reach the goal of a 25% reduction in administrative burdens on undertakings at EU and national level by 2012 and stated that they would examine legislative proposals in this light. They called for a stronger mechanism for the monitoring and enforcing of the implementation of EU legislation in the Member States. Parliament insisted on the proper implementation of the new comitology procedure and the safeguarding of Parliament's rights in this respect, and attached particular importance to comitology procedures in the field of financial services (the Lamfalussy procedure.) With regard to the budget, Parliament demanded its full association with the review both of EU spending and of the EU own resources system. In order to achieve a positive Statement of Assurance from the Court of Auditors, the Commission should undertake the technical preparations and urge the Member States to issue national declarations as suggested in Parliament's 2003, 2004 and 2005 resolutions on the discharge. The audit summaries were only a first step in this direction. Parliament expected a more proactive approach from the Member of the Commission responsible for transparency and good governance. Parliament then called on the Commission to reform without delay its procedures and to involve more closely the Parliament and its competent committees during the process for the selection and appointment of Agency Directors. It would take the necessary measures to allow for a more in-depth process for the selection of Agency Directors.

**Communicating Europe:** the Commission must intensify its efforts to develop a more effective communication policy in order to achieve a better understanding on the part of citizens of EU action and its contribution to addressing their concerns, with a view to preparing the way for ratification of the Lisbon Treaty and the European elections in 2009. Lastly, Parliament asked the Commission to set out clearly how it intends to put into practice the content of its communication priorities, particularly the priority relating to the Lisbon Treaty.