Resolution on the Commission's Annual Policy Strategy for 2009

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PURPOSE: presentation of the **Annual Policy Strategy** for 2009 by the Commission [COM(2008)0072].

CONTENT: the current Annual Policy Strategy sets out fixed priorities for the last year of the mandate of the current Commission. The strategic objectives defined by the Commission at the beginning of its mandate - to promote prosperity, solidarity, freedom and security, and to strengthen the global role of Europe– remain at the heart of the guidelines established by the Commission to carry out its work.

5 priority areas: in 2009, the following 5 policy objectives will be emphasised:

1. growth and jobs;
2. climate change and sustainable Europe;
3. development of a common immigration policy;
4. putting the citizen first;
5. Europe as a world partner.

According to this document, 2009 should be considered as a **pivotal year** in as far as it should promote the achievement of results for citizens and businesses. To accomplish this, actions will be taken in the following areas:

- Growth and jobs will remain a major policy priority for the Union;
- Further efforts will be made to tackle climate change and to meet the energy needs of the Union;
- The Commission will follow up on the Single Market review and on the revised Social Agenda;
- The Commission will also look forward, laying the foundations for the years ahead, through a revision of the budget, based on current consultations, and the preparation of the next financial perspectives;
- It will take action to develop a common immigration policy (in order to harness the opportunities provided by migration in an era of globalisation);
- Initiatives will be put forward to simplify the life of citizens and ensure their security;
- Negotiations with candidate countries will be pursued on the basis of the renewed consensus on enlargement and efforts should be made to strengthen the political and economic ties with partners around the world (particularly in the context of new partnerships to be implemented with African countries).

“**Better Regulation**”: the Commission will also continue to deliver on its “Better Regulation” agenda, to focus on the proper enforcement of EU legislation and to ensure the sound management of financial programmes. Numerous proposals have been put forward to reduce the administrative burden. These proposals will not affect the strategic objectives or the degree of ambition of existing texts. On the contrary, due to efforts made to improve the regulatory environment and to develop high standards in areas such as health, security and environmental protection, the EU should lead the way to contributing to the improvement of the global regulatory framework. However, the full potential of the “Better Regulation” agenda can only be reached through productive cooperation with other institutions and Member States.

Communication on Europe and the Treaty of Lisbon: 2009 will also be an important year for the European Union, marked by the possible entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, the election of a new European Parliament and a new European Commission. In this context, important measures will be taken to encourage communication to citizens, particularly in the areas of economic and social development leading to a better quality of life, protection of the environment (often linked to energy policy), security, migration, education and the fight against terrorism.

Human Resources 2009: in addition to the Commission's policy priorities, the Annual Policy Strategy proposes an allocation of human and financial resources to reinforce the Commission's ability to deliver in priority areas. The Commission expects to obtain 250 new posts linked to the enlargement in 2009. It will free up 600 additional positions through redeployment, which will give a total of 850 posts to meet priority needs. The new demands stemming from the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty will also be taken into account.

Financial Resources 2009: to meet the different objectives, the Commission aims to reinforce budgetary resources in the following areas:

- **Competitiveness for growth and employment** (rubric 1a): an increase of EUR 619 million (5.8% compared to 2008);
- **Cohesion for growth and employment** (rubric 1b): an increase of EUR 1.538 billion, a 3.3% rise compared to 2008;
- **Conservation and management of natural resources** (rubric 2): the gradual introduction of direct aid for agriculture will be pursued in the Member States that joined the EU in 2004. For these countries the percentage will increase from 50% to 60% of the final amount of aid. For the Member States which joined in 2007, aid will increase from 30% to 35% of the final amount;
- **Freedom, security and justice** (rubric 3a): an overall increase in expenditure in the order of EUR 100 million (16%) to ensure the management of external borders to implement the policy in terms of visas and the free movement of people (+18%), as well as the common policy on immigration and asylum (+18%);
- **Citizenship** (rubric 3b): some EUR 630 million will be allocated to rubric 3b, the equivalent of a 5.3% rise compared to 2008, which will allow the investment of more funds in key areas regarding European citizens (public health, consumer protection, civil protection, cultural and communication programmes);
- **The EU as a world partner** (rubric 4): the peace process in the Middle East and the implementation of an agreement defining the future status of Kosovo will remain the key political priorities of the EU in 2009; the current level of funds for Palestine and Kosovo must be increased: EUR 1.537 billion has been allocated to Palestine for the period 2007-2013, and EUR 535 million to Kosovo for the period 2007-2011. Other initiatives in the area of external relations of the EU will require additional measures, in particular: the new EU strategy for Central Asia (the Commission proposes granting EUR 15 million in 2009, and EUR 25 million in 2010) and the thematic programme for environment and sustainable management of natural resources including energy (ENRTP) (an additional EUR 10 million in 2009).

Conclusions: on the basis of the Annual Strategy Policy, the Commission will initiate an exchange of views with the European Parliament and Council on where the policy priorities should lie in 2009, and how this should be reflected in the Commission's legislative and work programme to be adopted in October and in the budget for 2009.