Resolution on the future of the European Social Fund

2010/2852(RSP) - 07/10/2010 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution tabled by the Committee on Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunity on the future of the European Social Fund.

Parliament notes the key role played by the **ESF in promoting employment and combating poverty** in the context of integration/reintegration into working life through training;, promoting the adaptation of workers" skills to the demands of the labour market, and workers" integration into the labour market, and reinforcing social inclusion. It considers that the ESF must be strengthened as the main engine underpinning the Europe 2020 strategy.

Members believe that the Europe 2020 targets and objectives can be achieved by use of this instrument with a view to supporting SMEs and adjusting education systems and vocational education and training (VET) to the needs of SMEs.

Parliament believes that a stronger focus on properly functioning labour markets and on social conditions is vital. It believes that it is necessary to: (i) place considerable emphasis on updating education systems and VET, on decent work, including the fight against precarious and undeclared work, on gender equality and the creation of conditions for reconciling work and private life, and (ii) on ensuring that people currently excluded from the labour market can gain access to it.

The resolution recognises that the structural funds largely remain the main funding instrument for the pursuit of social objectives. The Commission is invited to promote synergies with other programmes and to strengthen the potential of structural funds through simplification especially of controls, flexibility and improvement of procedures and follow-up, emphasising the social integration dimension.

Members feel that the **role of the ESF in improving workers" employability and adaptability** must be strengthened. They call on the Commission to consider all possible policy options for boosting the contribution of the ESF in the context of the future architecture of the structural funds; in order to enhance the social model of the European Union. They believe that there are considerable advantages in maintaining the ESF under the basic regulation on general provisions on the funds, but with its own rules.

Lastly, Parliament considers that the outcomes of the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion could help the Commission to target ESF support more effectively in combating poverty and social exclusion in the EU by **supporting better education for future jobs**.