Resolution on employment and social aspects of the Europe 2020 strategy

2014/2779(RSP) - 25/11/2014 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on employment and social aspects of the Europe 2020 strategy, tabled by its Committee on Employment and Social Affairs.

In general, Parliament expressed regret that current policies remain focused solely on economic growth without acknowledging the need for an **inclusive, rights-based and sustainable approach**. It regretted that the Annual Growth Surveys and Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs) adopted so far as part of the annual European Semester cycles have not been sufficiently aligned with the Europe 2020 employment, poverty reduction and education targets.

It called on the Member States to

- implement efficient monitoring and recording of best-practice models and methods in Europe, focusing on reducing unemployment rates, especially among young people;
- apply a more ambitious and concrete approach when translating EU targets into their own targets at national level;
- set up platforms of social partners to combine the interests of employers and employees.

Members urged the Commission and the Member States to ensure that any increase in the employment rate is the result of adding to the number of **quality jobs** within the European economy.

Precarious employment: Members regretted the fact that the increases in employment rates have partly been the result of precarious forms of employment such as zero-hour contracts, bogus self-employment and involuntary part-time work. They called on the Member States to include additional indicators such as child poverty levels, access to healthcare and homelessness.

More focus on youth: Members recalled that, according to Eurofound, the cost of young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEETs) (in lost income, lost tax revenue and increased spending on welfare transfers) in the EU rose from 153 billion in 2011 to 162 billion in 2012.

Increased EU funding is needed in order to attain the Europe 2020 strategy target of 75% employment. Members encouraged Member States, in order to reach the 75% employment targets, to **improve leadership, management and entrepreneurial skills among young people** so that young people can become employers and not just employees.

Juncker Initiative: Members welcomed the announcement by Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker concerning a comprehensive investment programme to fight unemployment. They encouraged linking these investments to concrete employment and poverty-related goals.

Further measures are called for such as:

- focusing on sectors with high growth and job creation potential such as the green sector, the white sector and ICT;
- more funding should be allocated to Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs, in order to more efficiently support youth entrepreneurship and youth mobility;
- the reinseration of women;
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- eliminating unnecessary administrative burdens and bureaucracy for the self-employed, micro-enterprises and SMEs, and to facilitate the conditions for start-up businesses;
- the need to shift the tax burden away from labour towards other forms of sustainable taxation in order to promote growth and job creation;
- promoting and improving the European Job Mobility Portal EURES and the Public Employment Services.

Public consultation: Parliament considered that the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy are yet to be achieved. Therefore, they called on the Commission to **open a public consultation procedure for the review of the European Semester** in order to improve its effectiveness and legitimacy, as part of the mid-term review.

Protect the most vulnerable: Members called for urgent measures to reverse the trend of increasing rates of at-risk-of-poverty and social exclusion in order to meet the Europe 2020 headline target of lifting at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty or social exclusion. It called on the Member States to guarantee access to the labour market and adequate social security for the most vulnerable members of society and reduce poverty and help those at risk of exclusion.

Social budget reduction: Members regretted the fact that the Multiannual Financial Framework adopted for 2014-2020, with a budgetary allocation of EUR 960 billion, represented the **first ever net reduction in the EU budget**. They considered that t**he MFF is not sufficient to help achieve the employment and social targets of the Europe 2020 strategy**. It, therefore, considered the mid-term review of the MFF to be of paramount importance for reshaping the strategic orientation of the EU's expenditure towards a job-rich economic recovery.

Civil society and European Parliament scrutiny: lastly, Parliament stressed the essential role of the consultation process with civil society stakeholders in order to boost the democratic legitimacy of the process in order for the reforms to be acceptable to citizens.

It called on the Commission to take into account the outcome of the ongoing public consultation before publishing concrete proposals for the mid-term review of the strategy and insisted equally that **Parliament must be consulted on the final decisions before they are adopted**.